The Message of Stewardship

Cushman

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THE MESSAGE OF STEWARDSHIP

THE MESSAGE OF STEWARDSHIP

A Book for Daily Devotions and Class Study

A COMPLETE REVISION

RALPH SPAULDING CUSHMAN

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THE MESSAGE OF STEWARDSHIP

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO

THOSE CHRISTIAN BUSINESS MEN AND WOMEN

OF AMERICA

WHO HAVE STOOD AND ARE STANDING

WITH ALL THEIR RESOURCES

OF PERSONALITY AND POSSESSIONS

IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE BATTLE FOR THE

CHRISTIAN CONQUEST OF THE WORLD

AND FOR

PEACE

FOREWORD

Bishop Ralph S. Cushman has brought to the preparation of this book unusual experience, scholarship, and study, and exceptional genius for interpreting the doctrine of stewardship. Not only does he accept and practice the principle of stewardship in his own life, but he has made a lifelong study of the subject from every possible angle—intensive study of the Scriptures, research in the areas in which stewardship is applicable, and a careful reading of what other authors have contributed in this field. Moreover, perhaps no other man living today has had such wide and intimate contacts with other persons possessing the same consuming interest in stewardship, both on the North American continent and in European circles.

In revising and rewriting The Message of Stewardship and adding the chapter "The Stewardship of World Missions," Bishop Cushman has placed all believers in stewardship deeply in his debt. This revision of his excellent book is an invaluable contribution to the united movement for stewardship enlistment among all Protestant denominations.

The fundamental philosophy of stewardship is found in this book. It is made perfectly clear from the background of Scripture, especially the teachings of Jesus, and the experience of the human race. Those who seek an interpretation of Christian experience in terms of practical everyday living will find it in this volume. The acceptance of its teaching can lead in only one direction—victorious Christian living.

Of special interest to students of the Bible is the abundance of scriptural material found in this book.

It abounds in apt quotations from the Bible, with an interpretation adequate and altogether satisfying to one who searches for the truth in stewardship.

Another characteristic of THE MESSAGE OF STEWARDSHIP is its wealth of nonbiblical quotations, both prose and poetry, which set forth in exquisite beauty the philosophy and practice of Christian stewardship and introduce the reader to many of the best stewardship authorities in the world. In addition, many of Bishop Cushman's own poems on this subject are included. When the reader comes to one of these, he can almost hear the writer bursting into song in recognition of his stewardship allegiance to his Lord.

Here is a book in which minister and layman alike can find spiritual food for the need of the hour and sustaining grace for the months and years ahead. This is a volume for preachers, for teachers, for officials, and for all who have any responsibility for leadership in the local church. It is a book, also, for the average church member who desires to make his life effective in advancing the Kingdom of God. May God bless it as it finds its way into the hands of his children to bring them into a full-orbed stewardship life.

GEORGE L. MORELOCK

PREFACE

THIS revised edition of THE MESSAGE OF STEWARDSHIP is made at the request of Dr. George L. Morelock, of the General Board of Lay Activities of The Methodist Church. Much of the material which appears in the first edition is continued here, although frequently abbreviated and rewritten. I wish to repeat in part some statements made in the Preface of the first edition, nearly a generation ago:

This book has been written out of a strong desire to indicate more clearly the deep spiritual value of the stewardship message by showing that the principles of stewardship underlie the entire message of the Old Testament and the New.

An outline of the argument as given in the following pages would point out ten definite propositions concerning stewardship: (1) It is Jesus' philosophy of life. (2) It is the very essence of the character of God. (3) It is the special theme of the teachings of Jesus. (4) "Stewardship" rather than "service" is God's key word. (5) Pentecost deepened the stewardship conviction in the minds of the disciples. (6) The Pentecost Church laid special emphasis on the stewardship of prayer. (7) The ancient enemy of stewardship is covetousness. (8) The pentecostal stewardship consciousness was simultaneous with consecration of property to the will of God. (9) The need of the world today—as it was in the early days—is the application of the principle of stewardship to all life, including property and business. (10) God's approach to stewardship of material resources has always been through the dedication of a holy portion, or the tithe.

The book is proposed both for use in daily devotions and for classes in the study of stewardship. To the latter end the introductory section of each chapter will serve as the basis of study, while the daily readings will furnish additional help.

My only added word is this, that a careful and prolonged study of the message of this book deepens the conviction within me that the scriptural bases of Christian stewardship are fundamental to the building not only of a vital Church but of a new world order.

R. S. C.

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CHAPTER I

Jesus' Philosophy of Life

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL is responsible for the assertion that "there is dynamite enough in the New Testament to blow civilization to bits." While the figure is unfortunate, for truth is more like leaven than dynamite, yet there is a valuable suggestion in the statement. Perhaps Pastor Robinson had in mind the same thing when he told the embarking Pilgrims that each new generation makes some fresh and transforming discovery out of God's Book.

During the first World War a prominent editor declared: "One of the most noticeable of the changes that the war period has brought about is the modification of the motives of business men—their deepened sense of responsibility and their recognition of the fact that 'big business' is a public, social, and professional affair *existing only incidentally for the enrichment of*

business leaders." It is too bad that this new sense of stewardship faded considerably during the years that followed. But some gains were evidently made, for again—beginning during World War II—a revival of stewardship consciousness has appeared. Americans, whether in or out of the Church, have been impressed with the responsibility which they have, individually and as a nation, for the building of a new world. The old command which Jesus gave to go into all the world with the gospel is thus being presented to Christians and non-Christians alike as an essential part of our stewardship. These are the signs of the times, but they are not strange to the student of Scripture who has been waiting for the day when the world would accept Jesus' philosophy of life, *which is stewardship.*

Sooner or later everyone seeks to frame some sort of explanation of life. It is interesting to note that William James once said: "I know that you have a philosophy, each and all of you, and that the most interesting and important thing about you is the way in which it determines the perspective in your several worlds. . . . The philosophy which is so important in each of us is not a technical matter; it is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means." (*Pragmatism,* pp. 3-4.) Very often a little child will ask a question which indicates the early yearning to discover some divine purpose behind the things that are seen and expressed. "What is it all about?" was the way a high-school boy phrased it. Only devout students of Scripture can find anything like a satisfactory answer to the above question. Paganism attempts it and fails; thus these lines of the Persian poet Omar Khayyám:

> Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
> That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
> The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
> Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Remould it nearer to the Heart's desire!

Contrast the words of the Christian writer Whittier:

The same old baffling questions!
O my friend, I cannot answer them.
. . . . . .
I have no answer for myself or thee,
Save that I learned beside my mother's knee;
"All is of God that is, and is to be;
And God is good." Let this suffice us still,
Resting in childhood trust upon his will
Who moves to his great ends unthwarted by the ill.

The poet here indicates two important findings in the "mystery of things." First of all, "God is good"; second, he "moves to his great ends." Both are vital. Not only is God good—and love—but he is supreme intelligence. He is divine love, but he also has a *perfectly intelligent program for the world.* When we speak of Jesus' philosophy of life, we really mean God's philosophy as revealed in the person of his Son. Jesus Christ was God's revelation of the true and final philosophy of life. There have been other philosophies worthy of study, but the philosophy of Jesus was the climax of them all.

A generation ago William DeWitt Hyde wrote *The Five Great Philosophies of Life,* in which he pointed out the inferiority of the various attempts of men to frame a philosophy of life. Beginning with the philosophy of Epicurus, who taught that "the pursuit of pleasure is the real end of life," Dr. Hyde indicated the inadequacy of each of these pagan philosophies, showing that, whatever there is of good in the Stoic, who preached self-control by law, or in the Platonist, who practiced a mystic but selfish asceticism, or in the

Aristotelian, who propounded a somewhat lofty gospel, which, however, was only for the few, *the best in all these systems* finds consummation in Jesus' philosophy of a *voluntary, loving stewardship*. For instance, the words of William Ernest Henley may be cited as Stoicism in its most attractive form:

> Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the pit from pole to pole,
> I thank whatever gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul.
>
> It matters not how strait the gate,
> How charged with punishments the scroll,
> I am the master of my fate;
> I am the captain of my soul.

Lofty as these sentiments are, they proved to be pathetically inadequate in the life of the one who voiced them—and so they prove for any individual. In spite of mention of the "gods," they leave out any real dependence upon the Almighty, or any co-operation in his program. On the other hand, the best of Stoicism is preserved to us in these Christian lines from Robert Browning, which not only breathe of the eternal purposes but also point to the Source of human strength, and then leave us with a song at the end of the day:

> I go to prove my soul!
> I see my way as birds their trackless way.
> I shall arrive! what time, what circuit first,
> I ask not: but unless God send his hail
> Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
> In some time, his good time, I shall arrive:
> He guides me and the bird. In his good time!

Thus a study of the great philosophies of life reveals that, while there is a residue of truth in each of

them, Jesus has taken the essentials of them all in his philosophy of a loving stewardship. The outstanding difference between the Christian conception of life and that of the pagan lies in the emphasis on a personal God who has a benevolent program for the saving and development of the *whole world,* a program which gives to every person his own responsible part. Jesus thus taught that *life is a stewardship.*

First Week—First Day

PHILOSOPHY MUST BE LIVABLE

It is important, first of all, to study our Lord's philosophy *as demonstrated in his own life consciousness.* The scripture that follows gives the first words ever recorded as coming from the lips of the boy Jesus:

And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

—Luke 2:46-49

The last words in this scripture are translated in the King James Version as "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The meaning of the two translations is not fundamentally different. There are at least three things in these first words that mark a new epoch in the world's thinking about life: (1) God is a Father with a father's compassion; (2) the Father has "business" to be transacted in the world; (3) as the

son of his Father, the child should make his Father's business his first concern.

Just how revolutionary were Jesus' views will be seen by contrasting them with those of some of the philosophers of that day. Dr. Luke tells us (Acts 17:18) that when Paul was in Athens, some years later, preaching the gospel of Jesus, "certain of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say?" The difference between Christ's philosophy and that of a large part of the pagan world is indicated by comparing the words of Jesus even as a boy with Dr. Hyde's representation of the Epicurean attitude:

> Pleasure is our great task, "the gift of life, the end of ends." To be happy ourselves and radiating centers of happiness to choice circles of congenial friends—this is the Epicurean ideal. The world is a vast reservoir of potential pleasures. Our problem is to scoop out for ourselves and our friends full measure of these pleasures as they go floating by. It would be foolish for us to try to alter the world. Our only concern is to get out of it all the pleasure we can, without troubling ourselves to put anything valuable back into it. Since it is accidental, impersonal, we owe it nothing. We simply owe ourselves as big a share of pleasure as we can grasp and hold.

What chasms of space lie between these words of pure selfishness and those spoken by Jesus to his mother: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" How the words burn with a sense of divine mission!

READ LUKE 2:41-49

I know, Lord, thou hast sent him—
Thou art so good to me!
But thou hast only lent him—
His heart's for thee!

I cannot look upon him—
So strangely burned his eyes!
Hath not some grieving driven him
From Paradise?

But e'en when he was nursing
A baby at my breast,
It seems he was dispersing
The World's unrest.

—CALE YOUNG RICE

Man, by living wholly in submission to the Divine Influence, becomes surrounded with, and creates for himself, *internal pleasures* infinitely greater than any he can otherwise attain to—a state of heavenly beatitude.

—J. P. GREAVES

God is a kind Father. He sets us in all the places where he wishes us to be employed; and that employment is truly "our Father's business."

—JOHN RUSKIN

O Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sakes didst humble thyself from thy dwelling place in heaven, teach us, we beseech thee, to live in thy will. Cleanse our hearts from all selfish ambitions, and show us thy way. Grant us so to be stirred by thy passion for the world, that, faithfully following thy leading for our lives, we may rejoice with thee in thy final victory, to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.

First Week—Second Day

PHILOSOPHY MUST INCLUDE OTHERS

THE splendor of Jesus' philosophy of life lies primarily in his *basic emphasis upon the fatherhood of the Creator* and his loving concern for every one of his creatures. The difference between this conscious-

ness of Jesus and the attitude revealed in the following prayer of the pagan philosopher Seneca is truly pathetic: "O Neptune, you may save me if you will; you may sink me if you will; but whatever happens, I shall keep my rudder true." Notice that the pagan philosopher is determined to work out his highest destiny all alone in spite of the gods. Jesus declares that before he was born there was an intelligent and loving Providence that called him forth to "bear witness unto the truth" and be a steward of God. To this end was he born. The conviction was with him as a boy. It grew deeper and deeper in the midst of the years. Now at the end of his earthly life he can make this noble declaration at the judgment seat of the Roman ruler:

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world.

—John 18:36-37

READ JOHN 18:33-37

Therefore as every man is wholly God's own portion by the title of creation, so all our labors and care, all our powers and faculties must be wholly employed in the service of God, and even all the days of our life; that this life being ended, we may live with him forever.

—JEREMY TAYLOR

O strange and wild is the world of men
  Which the eyes of the Lord must see—
With continents, islands and tribes and tongues,
  With multitudes bond and free;
All kings of the earth bow down to him,
  And yet—he can think of me.

For none can measure the mind of God
Or the bounds of eternity;
He knows each life that has come from him,
To the tiniest bird and bee,
For the love of his heart is so deep and wide
That it takes in even me.

—MARY E. ALBRIGHT

O Lord of hosts, who has given us our station and our weapons in thine army for the warfare of this life, setting comrades beside us and sending Jesus Christ before us; make us to feel the glory and strength of thy victorious advance and to hear triumph song where Christ marches at the head of his saints, conquering, and to conquer; for his sake. Amen.

—The Indian Prayer Cycle

First Week—Third Day

PHILOSOPHY MUST INCLUDE GOD

ON Sunday, February 12, 1857, the mother of Phillips Brooks wrote in her diary: "This has been a most happy day in which I have witnessed the confirmation of my son Phillips, aged twenty-one, at Dorchester." It seems strange that this great American preacher did not unite with the Church, nor dedicate himself fully to the service of God, until after he had been in divinity school for some months. For years he seems to have been confused, like many other young people, on the issue of whether or not the largest life for him lay in absolute abandonment of self to God. With Jesus there was no doubt on this question, as indicated in the following scripture:

Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship

me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

—Matthew 4:8-11

"No man can truly say that he has made a success of life unless he has written at the top of his life journal, 'Enter God,' " said Robert Louis Stevenson. The life of Jesus teaches more than this. It is not enough to write "Enter God." God must enter and have full control. The secret of the success of Jesus is indicated in John R. Mott's statement "The will of God was Jesus' north star." That star shone clearly through every storm and in the hour of terrific temptation. Confident that the fulfillment of life lies in doing God's will, Jesus would not permit himself to be allured by any appeal of pagan philosophy for self-interest or self-indulgence. Jesus knew that his own highest interest lay in the *fulfillment of his God-given stewardship.*

READ MATTHEW 4:1-11

I like the man who faces what he must
With step triumphant and a heart of cheer;
Who fights the daily battle without fear,
Sees his hopes fail, yet keeps unfaltering trust
That God is God; that somehow, true and just,
His plans work out.

—SARAH KNOWLES BOLTON

God has a life plan for every human life in the eternal counsels of his will. When he arranged the destiny of every star and every sand-grain and every grass blade and each of those tiny insects which live but for an hour, the Creator had a thought for you and me. Our life was to be the slow unfolding of this thought, as the cornstalk from the corn or the flower from the gradually opening bud. It was a

thought of what we were to be, of what we might become, of what he would have us to do with our days and years of influence with our lives.

—HENRY DRUMMOND

Blessed Christ, who hast taught us that we may have life and have it more abundantly, purify our vision, we beseech thee, that, being enabled to see thee as the enlarger of all life, we may perfectly abandon ourselves to thy holy will, and find in thee our largest consummation and bliss. Amen.

First Week—Fourth Day

LOVE IN JESUS' PHILOSOPHY

NEXT to his consciousness of God, both as sovereign Lord and as heavenly Father, the consuming *compassion for the multitudes* which Jesus always shows is the most conspicuous feature in his philosophy. He insists that love to God can best be shown in service to men. But there is more than "service" in sharing with God his plans for the saving of all his children. This is an innovation which love threw into philosophy, an innovation that has always staggered pagan thinking. Plato could show some little concern for a small group of kindred spirits. It was a great advance when, two hundred and fifty years before Christ came, Aristotle declared: "Thou shalt devote thy utmost powers to some section of our common social welfare, and shalt hold this end above all lesser goods, such as pleasure, money, honor." But even this high-water mark in pagan philosophy does not approach the personal compassion which Jesus showed for the individual. "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them." We need not be surprised that in the Nazareth synagogue he quoted:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

—Luke 4:18-21

It is this love, even for the undeserving, that has amazed the pagan world. Some years ago, during a famine, Dr. J. W. Bradley, of Suchien, China, visited a village of 164 families, where 148 of them were living on potato vines in February, while expecting a harvest in June. As he sat down to eat his lunch that day a crowd of starving children came near. He could not eat, and, dividing up his lunch, he gave it out as far as it would go. A man sitting near, who had sold everything to keep his family from starving, said to him: "When you came here a few years ago I called you a foreign devil. Now I see you going about distributing bread to my people and ministering to the sick, and you say you are doing this for Jesus. Dr. Bradley," he said, "please tell me, who is Jesus?"

READ MATTHEW 9:35-38

Jesus taught us to make every human interest we touch as precious as our own, and to treat all persons with whom we deal as members of that beneficent system of mutual goodwill which is the Kingdom of Heaven.

—WILLIAM DEWITT HYDE

"I worked for men," my Lord will say
When we meet at the end of the King's highway,
"Walked with the beggar along the road,
I kissed the bondsman stung by the goad,
I bore my half of the porter's load.
And what did you?" my Lord will say,
"As you traveled along the King's highway?"

"I made life sweet," my Lord will say,
When we meet at the end of the King's highway.
"I smoothed the path where the thorns annoy,
I gave the mother back her boy,
I mended the children's broken toy,
And what did you?" my Lord will say,
"As you traveled along the King's highway?"

—ROBERT DAVIS

Lord Jesus, help us to love men even as thou didst love them. Give us this day the spirit of thy compassion. Keep us from wounding any heart or adding to the burden of any life; and if, when this day is done, we be privileged to feel the joy of having cheered some toiler at his task, thine be the praise and the glory forever. Amen.

First Week—Fifth Day

HAPPINESS IMPORTANT

"WE may always be sure, whatever we are doing, that we cannot be pleasing Him if we are not happy ourselves," declared John Ruskin. Jesus would not tolerate the pagan philosophy that pleasure-seeking and self-interest are the chief end of life, but we should not forget that happiness was an important item in his own philosophy. "I came that they may have life," he said. And, echoing his message, Paul urged his fellow Christians to "rejoice in the Lord al-

ways." The distinction is that Jesus taught that happiness comes not through making it the chief quest of life but as the result of faithful stewardship. There is no doubt that acceptance of Jesus' philosophy of life is the only way by which the world can finally be flooded with the divine joy. All the problems of pain and pleasure which occupied so large a place in pagan philosophies are solved by Jesus' loyalty to the program of his Father. However heroic may be the demands of his stewardship, Jesus teaches that it was his "joy" and his "meat" to do the will of God.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

—John 15:10-11

READ JOHN 4:31-34

To do the work and seize the joy of each day as it comes, so that the forward look shall not dim our eyes to the beauty along the road; and to let the light of the Christ-revealed God fall on every scene and time, leading us to regard every touch of loveliness in earth and sky, every sweet affection and fellowship, every holy thought and aspiration as signs that behind all the mystery of this strange world there is a Great Heart of Love, in whose keeping we are safe; these are little counsels to guide us in the pilgrim way.

—W. GARRETT HORDER

Thy love
Shall chant itself its own beatitudes
After its own life-working. A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad;
A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest.

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Dear God, the day returns and brings a thousand joyous opportunities; help us to make the most of every one. Teach us to be glad. Grant that our eyes may all day long behold thy blue; that every song of bird may find an echo in our hearts; or if the sky be overcast and gathering storms have hushed the notes of birds, grant that we then may draw from out the treasure storehouse of our souls, and still be glad in thee. Amen.

First Week—Sixth Day

PRAYER NECESSARY

JESUS revealed his consciousness that life is a stewardship, planned by the Father, in his *constant dependence on God.* The steward must frequently report and consult with his Lord. The Father is the source not only of the program but of the power which his human representative needs in every part of the task. The Son was still the steward and no exception to the rule. Many were the nights he spent in prayer while his disciples slept, thus showing that with the deepening sense of stewardship comes the growing burden of responsibility which drives men into a closer communion with God. Evidently his holy habit of communion with his Father supported Jesus in the darkest hour of his need. So habitual had this communion become that his only relief in the dark hours of Gethsemane was to lose himself in the will of God. In the scripture that follows note especially the words "as his custom was":

And he came out, and went, as his custom was, unto the mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye

enter not into temptation. And he was parted from them about a stone's cast; and he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

—Luke 22:39-43

READ LUKE 22:39-46

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent;
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
. . . . . .
Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content;
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.

—SIDNEY LANIER

It is not so much resolution as renunciation, not so much courage as resignation, that we need. He that has once yielded thoroughly to God will yield to nothing but God.

—JOHN RUSKIN

My heart needs thee, O Lord, my heart needs thee! No part of my being needs thee like my heart. . . . Be thou the strength of my heart. Be thou its fortress in temptation, its shield in remorse, its covert in the storm, its star in the night, its voice in the solitude! . . . I cannot rule this heart of mine; keep it under the shadow of thine own wings!

—GEORGE MATHESON

First Week—Seventh Day

FAITHFULNESS THE CROWNING VIRTUE

"DOES the road wind up-hill all the way?"
"Yes, to the very end."
"Will the day's journey take the whole long day?"
"From morn to night, my friend!"

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

The conviction voiced in these lines concerning the steward's pilgrimage is expressed in still another way by the Apostle Paul when he says, "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Both the poet and the apostle had before them the example of our Lord. Faithfulness to the end is the crown of stewardship. Not so much the quantity, or even the character, of the service, but unswerving devotion "to the very end" is what God requires of his stewards. This is the example set us by the Master himself. He endured the cross, despised the shame, and glorified in his dying breath that he had accomplished the work his Father had given him to do. In those majestic words "It is finished," Jesus offers his final and overwhelming vindication of the philosophy of his life:

After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

—John 19:28-30

READ REVELATION 3:19-22

I cannot think or reason,
I only know he came
With hands and feet of healing
And wild heart all aflame.

With eyes that dimmed and softened
At all the things he saw,
And in his pillared singing,
I read the Marching Law.

—WILLARD WATTLES

The great moral combat between human life and each human soul must be single. . . . When a soul arms for battle he goes forth alone.

—Owen Meredith

Nothing earthly will cause me to give up my work in despair. I encourage myself in the Lord God, and go forward.

—David Livingstone

O thou Lamb of God that takest away the sin of the world, we need not ask thee to have mercy upon us; help us to have mercy upon ourselves. Thou hast loved us from the beginning, and thou wilt forgive us our sins when, despising our repeated unfaithfulness, we do, in deed and in truth, set our faces to the cross. Help us, we beseech thee, for thy name's sake, to endure to the end. Amen.

QUESTIONS

Introduction.

a) What "fresh and transforming discoveries" have you recently made in the Bible?

b) How can stewardship be called Jesus' philosophy of life?

1. Philosophy Must Be Livable.

a) Why is it important to study the life of Jesus with his philosophy of the stewardship of life?

b) Why was the world antagonistic to the Christian philosophy when it came?

c) Does good stewardship imply that we accept the place in which we find ourselves as God's choice for us and not make any attempt to win a higher and a better place?

2. Philosophy Must Include Others.

a) What difference does it make whether or not we recognize God as our Father?

b) What did Jesus Christ mean when he said, "My Kingdom is not of this world?"
c) How can we be witnesses to truth just as Jesus was a witness to truth?

3. PHILOSOPHY MUST INCLUDE GOD.
a) What did Robert Louis Stevenson mean in the sentence quoted, and how much further should he have gone with the declaration?
b) Are our temptations similar to those which Jesus experienced?
c) What must I do before God can guide me?

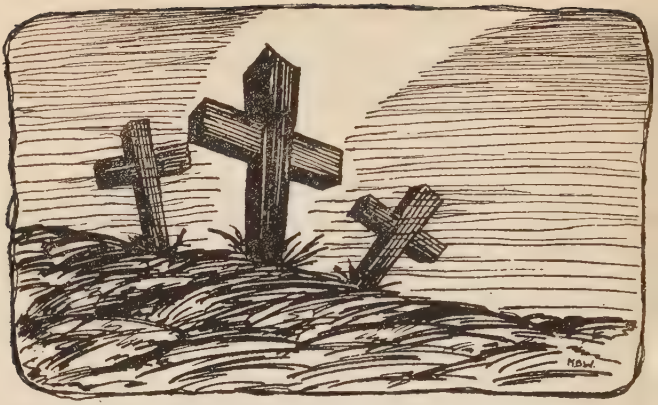
4. LOVE IN JESUS' PHILOSOPHY.
a) What was Jesus' attitude toward humanity?
b) In revealing God to man, what elements of personality, besides intellectual understanding, must be enlisted?
c) How far is it possible to make every human interest and contact as precious as our own interests?

5. HAPPINESS IMPORTANT.
a) Is there a stewardship of cheer, and what do you understand by joy of life as Jesus taught it?
b) What necessary service does pain perform in our stewardship?

6. PRAYER NECESSARY.
a) What is the first requisite to faithful stewardship—the acceptance of intellectual belief, the adoption of a program, or counseling with the Lord Jesus Christ?
b) What has renunciation to do with a life of stewardship?
c) Why is it necessary that we have emotional consciousness of the presence of God?

7. FAITHFULNESS THE CROWNING VIRTUE.
a) Have we any right to be proud when we have done a good work? To whom should we do our boasting?
b) What is the meaning of the following passage?

> Like as a father pitieth his children,
> So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.



CHAPTER II

God's Stewardship

IN the preceding chapter we saw something of the meaning of stewardship as revealed in the life purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this chapter we shall see *how God himself has chosen to place his own powers and resources under the law of stewardship*—the same law that he made for his creatures. Indeed, Jesus learned his philosophy of life from the character and purposes of his heavenly Father. When Jesus is asked, "What am I here for?" he answers by telling what God is here for. We sing, sometimes,

> He saw me plunged in deep distress,
> He flew to my relief;
> For me he bore the shameful cross
> And carried all my grief.

But the glory of Jesus, in his life and death on earth, lies in the ultimate truth that he was perfectly serving as the divine agent of the heavenly Father. That God is not only the sovereign Lord, to whom every one of his stewards shall some day give an account, but *that he has set a high and holy example of voluntarily placing himself under the law of stewardship,* is, perhaps, the most impressive fact in the whole universe.

Matthew Arnold declared that the greatest hymn in the English language was that which begins with the familiar lines,

> When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died.

But Calvary was nothing more nor less than the supreme effort in God's eternal appeal to humanity, first expressed in the Creation, climaxing in the Cross, and continuing for ever and ever. The example of such consecration of the total resources of God is staggering when realized. "Consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls," is the exhortation given in Hebrews 12:3. How shameful is the selfishness of the best of Christians when placed in the light of the voluntary consecration of God!

Here is the fundamental truth: God set the example for his children from the very beginning. When John declares, "We love, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19), he is reporting a profound discovery: Behind the laws of stewardship which pervade the universe is love—love divine! Well did the poet exclaim "All's law and all's love." It is a great moment in any life when one makes that discovery—that law and love are inseparable, because both spring from the heart and character of God. When Jesus declared that "whosoever would save his life shall lose it," he had in his mind the picture of God the Eternal Steward. The

child of God must share this sense of stewardship or be out of harmony with his Creator.

It is this truth that lies behind Bishop Cranston's conclusion that God's universe was not made for misers or profligates: "The world has no place or use for misers, but for the world's sake a man would better be a miser than a rich profligate, rotting in his wealth, and by his contempt of decency and honor corrupting the young and outraging society. Physical self-indulgence lies in its infamy in body and mind. Luxury invites decay. This is nature's penalty for its violated law of stewardship."

It should be kept in mind throughout the study of this chapter that God made *only one reservation* when he placed all his resources at the disposal of humanity. That was his sovereign ownership of all his creation. Nowhere in Scripture is it indicated that God for one moment gives up this supreme relationship. But it will be seen that even this reservation was made in love, for the moral and spiritual benefit of humanity. Beginning with the first tragedy in the Garden of Eden, and continuing down to the industrial difficulties of the present hour, most of the trouble that has plagued humanity has come as a result of man's failure to recognize this eternal truth. There can be no genuine sense of Christian stewardship unless it springs from a profound conviction of God's sovereign ownership.

Second Week—First Day

CREATION AN ACT OF STEWARDSHIP

As far as known to mortal mind, the story of creation is the first revelation of God's personal sense of stewardship. If one is looking for the picture of a lonesome God, he can find it in this description of the Spirit of God mourning over the face of the deep, restless until

all his vast resources have been placed at the disposal of "others." Sam Walter Foss wrote:

> There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
> In the place of their self-content;
> There are souls like stars, that dwell apart,
> In a fellowless firmament.

But it could not be so with God. It was contrary to his character, just as it is to the character of any good steward, to find pleasure in lavishing on himself the resources in his possession. Paul points to a cardinal principle of stewardship when he says, "None of us liveth to himself." But this principle first came from the heart of God, who found it impossible to live unto himself, and, yearning for a race of men who could move at the same impulses, "created man in his own image."

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. . . . And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

—Genesis 1:1-2, 26

READ GENESIS 1:26-31

But the climax of demonstration of stewardship appears in God's application of the principle of stewardship in his sovereign relation. Being all-sufficient unto himself in his infinite attributes, he nevertheless counts it his chief glory to graciously administer the inexhaustive resources of his material empire for the benefit of his peopled world.

—BISHOP EARL CRANSTON

Ten thousand times ten thousand years,
These walls were being made for me!
To think that through the heat and cold,
While centuries were growing old,
He wrought in his vast majesty
That I might now his glory see!

—R. S. C.

O Eternal God, our everlasting Father, we praise thee, we adore thee, we worship thee. Surely thou hast created us in thine own image, for we are not at rest, save in thy presence. Glorify thyself in us today, that, being good stewards of thy boundless compassion, we may be faithful children of so gracious a Father; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Week—Second Day

STEWARDSHIP IN THE GARDEN

"God Teaching Stewardship" might well be the caption to the story of the Garden of Eden. Parenthood involves responsibility. The father is bound to pass on his principles to his children. Creation was a supreme venture on the part of God in *producing a breed of men who would share with him the enjoyment and administration of his boundless resources.* No yearning mother could bend more wistfully over the cradle of her child than did God over the cradle of the race. Only a parent who has knelt beside some little cot to pray that his first-born might be a blessing to the world can know how eagerly God planned that garden to "grow every tree that is pleasant," and how yearningly he desired that the child should share his Father's passion for the welfare of the world.

And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out

of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

—Genesis 2:8-9, 15

An excited manufacturer confronted with a strike among his employees was overheard to say, "I am just childish enough to believe that what is mine is my own, and when my old dad turned over to me this mill, along with his gold watch and the old family horse, he meant that I should do with it just as I pleased." On the contrary, God was trying to help his first children to avoid this false philosophy. *Not as owner, but as caretaker,* was Adam installed "in the park of Eden, to till it and to guard it" (Moffatt); and the injunction "Of one tree shalt thou not eat" was God's loving way of continuously advertising to the son the *proprietorship* of the Father. In its legal sense that first offense was "a challenge of God's right to control the domain he had created," but it was even more than this—it was the refusal of a child to follow his Father in consecration of life and resources for the upbuilding of the world. Tragedy alone could be the result. They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord!

READ GENESIS 3:6-9

The love that builds palatial homes and fills them with luxurious furnishings and costly statuary is not love for God or humanity. I do not envy homes build for family prestige. I tremble for their inmates lest they banish Christ, who loves the lowly, lonely, hungry, shivering, neglected ones. He allows comfort, but not luxury until all God's claims have been met, and never were more millions facing starva-

tion than today right in the heart of Christendom. It is surely not God's time for building fortunes out of his bounty, or for the American people to be untrue to their stewardship of freedom and equal opportunities for all peoples.

—Bishop Earl Cranston

Whether we climb, whether we plod,
Space for one task the scant years lend—
To choose some path that leads to God,
And keep it to the end.

—Lizette Woodworth Reese

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand:
When I awake, I am still with thee.

. . . . . .

Search me, O God, and know my heart:
Try me, and know my thoughts;
And see if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

—The Psalmist

Second Week—Third Day

SALVAGING MANKIND IS STEWARDSHIP

It is a long road that leads from the failure of our first parents to such a cry as came from George Matheson's lips: "O love that wilt not let me go." The most touching part of the story of the Garden of Eden is where, when the tragedy is done and the persons are still in hiding, a grieving Father goes out seeking his rebellious children:

And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid

themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden. And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou?

—Genesis 3:8-9

It was love that called unto Adam. In the last analysis the glory of God's stewardship lies in the fact that it is voluntary and free. So must it be with his children. Better have Adam fail in his trust than not be free to fail. But love persists. So God sets himself to the task of gathering up the wreckage of Eden in order to start over again in working out his eternal purposes of *making the kind of manhood that will share with him his compassion for the world.*

From Adam to Abraham is the story of a long struggle with the forces of sin and ignorance, but God is making progress. In the following scripture it is evident that God has found in Abraham a man who from the heart feels the same sense of stewardship that God felt. Indeed, it is God, the Supreme Steward, who is crying out in compassion for Sodom:

And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked? . . . And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake.

—Genesis 18:23, 32

READ GENESIS 12:1-3

My brethren, are we in this succession? Does the cry of the world's need pierce the heart, and ring even through the fabric of our dreams? . . . I am amazed how easily I become callous. . . . I so easily become enwrapped in the soft wool of self-indulgency, and the cries from far and near cannot reach my easeful soul. "Why do you wish to return?" I asked a noble missionary who had been invalided home: "Why do you wish to return?" "Because I can't sleep think-

ing of them!" But, my brethren, except when I spend a day with my Lord, the trend of my life is quite another way. I cannot think about them because I am so inclined to sleep!

—J. H. Jowett

O Light that followest all my way
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

—George Matheson

O God, who hast commanded us to be perfect, as thou our Father in heaven art perfect, put into our hearts, we pray thee, a continual desire to obey thy holy will. Teach us day by day what thou wouldst have us do, and give us grace and power to fulfill the same. May we never, from love of ease, decline the path which thou pointest out, nor from fear of shame turn away from it. Amen.

—Dean Henry Alford

Second Week—Fourth Day

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS STEWARDSHIP

Henry Ward Beecher once told of a little girl who interrupted at prayer at her mother's knee to ask, "Mamma, what is God doing all day long?" The child had begun to think, and it occurred to her that a real God must have a larger task than even keeping children and good folks safe during the hours of the dark. Many *good* people remain children in their thinking of God, and become mere dwarfs of the Kingdom, because it has never greatly dawned upon them that God has a world redemption program or that they have anything to do about it.

Nothing to do in this world of ours,
Where weeds spring up with the fairest flowers,
Where smiles have only a fitful play,
. . . . . .
And hearts are breaking every day.

Nothing to do! Thou Christian soul,
Wrapping thee 'round in thy selfish stole,
Off with the garments of sloth and sin,
Christ, thy Lord, hath a kingdom to win.

—Author unknown

From the beginning this was God's work: *to create in men a moral responsibility as "my brother's keeper."* There was no other way to make a moral world. Perhaps no one in the Old Testament expresses more passionately this burden for the salvation of the race than does Moses, the chosen leader of the Israelite people. In the day of their great sin he spoke out to the people, and again *it is God speaking* through his steward:

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

—Exodus 32:30-32

READ DEUTERONOMY 30:1-3

I think my soul was never so drawn out in intercession for others as it has been this night; I hardly ever so longed to live to God, and to be altogether devoted to him; I wanted to wear out my life for him. . . . I wrestled for the ingathering of souls, for multitudes of poor souls, personally, in many distant places. I was in such an agony, from sun half-an-hour high till near dark, that I was wet all over

with sweat; but O, my dear Lord did sweat blood for such poor souls: I longed for more compassion.

—David Brainerd

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all sunshine,
In the sweetness of our Lord.

—Frederick W. Faber

Dear God, enlarge and purify our hearts, we pray. Our vision is so narrow and our sympathies are so dwarfed. May thy Spirit Presence help us to widen our horizons and deepen our devotion to thee, and to the world of man which thou hast made; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Second Week—Fifth Day

REFUSAL OF STEWARDSHIP

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee.

—Hosea 11:8-9

The failure of the Hebrew nation to accept its God-given mission seems the most conspicuous refusal of divine stewardship in all history. But the love of God shines still more brightly through the gloom. In to-

day's scripture we have come to that part in the history of the Kingdom when political degeneration is increasingly evident. King after king has risen, rebelled against God, and departed. Nevertheless, God still pleads with his people.

Other peoples may take warning: Israel through its failure forfeited its leadership both in the Church of God and among the nations. But God "will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth." So even the darkness of the great rejection is relieved by the increasing number of glorious souls who give voice to the stewardship of God as prophet evangelists reveal to an ever-widening constituency the pleading heart of the heavenly Father.

READ ISAIAH 42:4-12

O Joy supreme! I know the Voice
Like none beside on earth or sea;
Yea, more O soul of mine, rejoice,
By all that he requires of me,
I know what God himself must be.
—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

God will keep no nation in supreme place that will not do supreme duty.
—WILLIAM MCKINLEY

It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the . . . great task remaining before us,—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, . . . and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.
—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Set my heart on fire with the love of thee, most loving Father. . . . For to him that loveth, nothing is

difficult, nothing is impossible. . . . O may love fill and rule my heart! For then there will spring up and be cherished between thee and me a line of character, and union of will, so that I may choose and refuse what thou dost. May thy will be done in me and by me forever. Amen.

—PARADISE FOR THE CHRISTIAN SOUL

Second Week—Sixth Day

SUPREME EXAMPLE OF STEWARDSHIP

WERE the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

—ISAAC WATTS

This loving gratitude which Isaac Watts expressed as he surveyed the "wondrous cross" is exactly that which God has been trying to arouse in human hearts from the beginning. We will not forget that it was the Cross that finally revealed God's love—the Cross which was the climax of the Incarnation.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died.

In the previous studies of this week we have seen God pleading through his various servants. Finally he said, "I will send my own Son." The Incarnation and Calvary are only another phase of the love of God that first placed man in the Garden of Eden as the caretaker of a wonderful world, that bore with him through long years of rebellion, that called to him through the law and the prophets, and that in the fullness of time made the climax of all appeals in the sending of the Child of Bethlehem. Accordingly, *God's stewardship is best realized in the Incarnation,* which

began in Bethlehem and ended in the supreme tragedy at Calvary.

The following scripture from Jesus' parable illuminates this age-old truth. It is interesting to note the similarity between this parable and the Garden of Eden story. From the beginning God has placed at the disposal of his creatures all the riches of the world, but he has insisted on his ownership, which has always been resisted by the selfishness and covetousness of man.

He sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance. And they took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him.

—Matthew 21:37-39

READ JOHN 1:11-14

Immortal love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea.

Our outward lips confess the name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came
And comprehendeth love.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Self-sacrifice is an everyday affair. By it we live. Without it society could not go on for an hour. . . . I mean by self-sacrifice any diminution of my possessions, pleasures or powers, in order to increase those of others. . . . The greatest conceivable sacrifice is when I give myself.

—PALMER

O Love divine, who in infinite mercy hast sought after all men, not willing that any should perish, hear

the prayer of thy servant. From the beginning thou hast given us all things; we give thee back thine own. O thou who didst dedicate in loving stewardship thy boundless resources, even unto Calvary, for our redemption, receive, we humbly beseech thee, this our consecration of time and talent, life and possessions, to the glory of thy holy Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Week—Seventh Day

FULFILLMENT OF STEWARDSHIP

And, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. . . . But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

—Acts 1:4-5, 8

As the Incarnation and the Cross were God's supreme appeal to his created children, so Pentecost was the *final act in the fulfillment of divine stewardship.* The agelong task had been to make man in God's own image. The law and the prophets could create a fear and abhorrence of sin. Bethlehem and Calvary could inspire a love for the character of a God who forgives and seeks to the uttermost; but how can a man lift himself by his boot straps? And how can a man rise victorious over his sins, or be a good steward like unto his Father? It is impossible without some superhuman help. Man can love the higher law. He can cry as desperately as Carlyle, "I will live a white life, if I go to hell for it!" But all human efforts must end in the wail

of Saul of Tarsus, "Wretched man that I am," were it not that God made one final appropriation of his divine resources and at Pentecost inaugurated the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Henceforth the victorious life is the privilege of every child of God, even as Jesus promised, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you."

I worship thee, O Holy Ghost,
I love to worship thee,
Thy patient love, at what a cost,
At last it conquered me!

—William F. Warren

Read Acts 1:4-8

It was through the amazing tragedy of Calvary and the marvelous transitions of Pentecost that the ageless mystery of the Trinity became radiant with meaning. Then they that sat in darkness saw a great light by which they read that neither with God in the heavens, nor among men on the earth, is there an undistributive reserve of life, or love, or power, or wisdom, or any resources, material or spiritual, that is to be sacred to the sole use or enjoyment of any holder or claimant. That is to say, God made love the keynote of creation, and from the beginning ordained and exemplified the principle of stewardship as manifesting supreme expression.

—Bishop Earl Cranston

If I have been less true, less strong,
Than I have power to be,
And followed, weakly, after wrong
When right appealed to me,
Dear God, forgive,
And give to me that insight clear, defined,
Which marks the progress of the soul;
For they who seek shall find.

—Lena Blinn Lewis

O blessed Holy Spirit, who hast promised to make intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be ut-

tered, hear us, we beseech thee, at the beginning of this, another day. So illumine our minds by thy holy presence, and so purify and strengthen our hearts by thy mighty power, that all day long, in word and thought and deed, we may be faithful stewards of the divine Grace entrusted to the children of God, from the foundation of the world; to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION.

a) What is the source of Jesus' philosophy of life? How did Jesus know the divine will?
b) What is the relation of law to liberty? Are these laws of expansion as well as restriction? Which is stewardship, expanding or narrowing?
c) Has God done his best for us? Can he do his best, before we pray?
d) Are Christians really selfish or only blind, or both? Who is a hypocrite? (Answer for yourself.)

1. CREATION AN ACT OF STEWARDSHIP.
   a) Where do we find the first hint of God's personal stewardship?
   b) Did Adam and Eve own the Garden of Eden? Did the Israelites own the land of Canaan? Does a manufacturer own his factory? Does a farmer own the soil of his farm?
   c) For whom does God work? To whom is he responsible? How are we like him?

2. STEWARDSHIP IN THE GARDEN.
   a) What was man's commission in the world from the beginning?
   b) Do "all things work together for good" to those who love God?
   c) What did Jesus mean by "Ye . . . shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"?
   d) Are comfortable homes, filled with luxuries and beautiful furnishings, sinful?

e) Is it possible to be good, and to enjoy the best things in life, both material and spiritual?

3. Salvaging Mankind Is Stewardship.
   a) Is there any virtue in being good because we are afraid to be bad, or because of the law, or because of people's opinion?
   b) Is stewardship a modern doctrine, or God's eternal plan for himself and for man?
   c) Would you call Abraham a steward of God?
   d) Would you say that the man who cannot be a friend cannot be a faithful steward? Why?

4. Social Responsibility Is Stewardship.
   a) What does God do all day?
   b) Why should we ask ourselves, "Am I my brother's keeper?"
   c) What made it possible for Moses to offer himself for the Israelites?
   d) How may we forget God?

5. Refusal of Stewardship.
   a) Why did God take away from the Israelites the commission to save the world?
   b) Why did not God destroy the Israelites?
   c) How can we know what God is?
   d) Is it true yesterday and today that "God will keep no nation in supreme place that will not do supreme duty"?

6. Supreme Example of Stewardship.
   a) What is the chief virtue required of stewards?

7. Fulfillment of Stewardship.
   a) How may we know the presence of God in our own life?
   b) What is the nature of the power we receive from personal contact with God?

CHAPTER III

Jesus Teaching Stewardship

DON'T you think the word 'stewardship' is vague? Many people do not know what you mean by it. Why not use 'consecration' instead?" A young minister asked this question at a conference in the Middle West; and in spite of the outbursts of "No! No!" that followed, many will recall that they themselves have asked a similar question. Indeed, it ought to be admitted frankly that "stewardship" *is* vague, but, on the other hand, so are many other words and phrases that Jesus used. That is to say, they are vague until some generation comes along ready to practice the thing that Jesus taught and lived, and then the word is alive—born again with new meaning. So it must be with the word "steward," which Jesus recoined from

Old Testament usage, and filled with wonder-working content. We must discover to the Church of this generation both the meaning and the word; they conquer together.

A NEW DAY IS DAWNING

One day Phillips Brooks visited that wonderful blind, deaf, and dumb girl, Helen Keller, and, through her remarkable teacher, he told her that God was very near, that he was her "unseen Father who loved her and would not let go her hand either in life or in death." And the child answered, "I have often felt him. He comes like warmth, *but I did not know before what to call him.*" In commenting, Newell Dwight Hillis said: "From that day the girl went from one realm of knowledge to another. She passed from kingdom to kingdom. Her tomb began to enlarge. Great windows were opened. At last she walked forth, free!" So it will be with the Church's vision of "stewardship." For a long time we have felt the teaching of Jesus as a passing warmth, a flash of light, or a glorious dream, but without enough of clearness to give it name. But a new day is dawning; new light is breaking upon the word of God. Men are beginning to take seriously Jesus' explanation of life as a God-given stewardship. There are numerous signs: "We are coming to see that it is a disgrace for a man to die rich," says one; while a young woman voices the same spirit after her escape from a building where scores burned to death, crying for days: "I did not even try to save anybody else. I thought only of myself! I thought only of myself!" Here are at least the beginnings of good stewardship, but we must *call it by name* until the world recognizes this philosophy of Jesus, and perceives that there is no other way under the heavens whereby fetters may be broken and the world saved. "Stewardship" is God's word for our generation. We must voice it and prac-

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tice it in our churches and in our industries and in all our personal relations—we must, indeed, make it the burning slogan of our age until men actually visualize what Jesus taught concerning the stewardship of life and property and all.

DISSIPATING THE VAGUENESS OF "STEWARDSHIP"

Just how the vagueness about stewardship may be dissipated is suggested by a consideration of Jesus' teaching concerning God's sovereign ownership, both in his life and in his preaching. At least sixteen of his parables reveal his emphasis upon this Old Testament doctrine, and yet here is one of the most stubbornly resisted truths of the Scriptures. Indeed, how few, even among "tithers" really "see through the eyes of God" and regard seriously God's ownership of *all* property, and yet the tithe was unquestionably instituted as an acknowledgment of God's *real* ownership of land and wealth and life. Let a person once see this truth and realize its practical implications, and God not only becomes a Presence personal and real, but the entire conception of one's relation to all of life and the kingdom of God is revolutionized. As an English writer puts it: "It makes a vast difference in the long run whether a man has at the back of his mind, in all his judgments, the principle 'One has a right to do as one likes with one's own'; or, on the other hand, the idea of property as a social trust or stewardship. Change of attitude here is the most 'practical' thing that can happen to men." Thus it seems evident that "stewardship" will cease to be vague just as soon as we accept and put into practice the plain teaching of our Lord.

Moreover, the word "steward" is vital, not only because Jesus and his disciples recoined it, but because it is difficult to find any other word that will exactly express the same meaning. When Jesus began to teach his philosophy of life he was compelled to seek for

words with which to portray the true relationship of a man to God and his Kingdom. It is an interesting study to list the words that he used to this end: "servant," "husbandman," "child," "sons," "friends," "stewards," are some of them. However, it is evident that none of them can be used to the total exclusion of the others. Not only is each one freighted with a broad aspect of the precious message that Jesus taught, but each has also the limitation of being unable to suggest the whole truth. Accordingly, no word is altogether satisfactory, but among these words the one that Jesus emphasizes as most broadly covering the whole scope of human relationship to God is "steward."

Such words as "trustee" or "agent" or "representative" are cold, and are at best merely suggestive of the meaning that Jesus puts into the Oriental word "steward," for in the Orient the steward was not only a trustee and a servant, but still more, he was a friend. So close was this friendship that it is written that Abraham's steward had "all goodly things of his master's in his hand." (Gen. 24:10). Likewise Joseph was steward in the house of Potiphar, and the confidence and esteem in which he was held is evidenced by the statement that the master "left all that he had in Joseph's hand" (Gen. 39:6). Thus when Jesus is searching for some word that will express both the responsibility and friendly relationship which God desires to exist between men and their heavenly Father, he goes over into the Old Testament and brings forth the picture of an Oriental home where the master has placed the moral and even the physical and spiritual welfare of all concerned in the hands of his trusted friend, the steward.

Accordingly, Jesus teaches that all men are stewards, whatever other relation may exist between them and God. *We are stewards by God's appointment. The only question is, what kind?* The fact that the steward

is the friend of his Master does not release him from accounting for his Friend's goods, nor does sonship cancel the obligation of faithfulness in dealing with the Father's resources. The child is just as much a thief if he steals from his father as from anyone else. On the other hand, consider the man who rebels against the king in his kingdom. His rebellion will not for a minute change his *status quo*. Though he hide "his Lord's money" in the ground, or in selfish expenditure or lavish extravagance of any kind, some day the lord of that servant cometh, and he will remind him of that time when the Master gave to him all the resources he ever had, and said unto him, "Occupy till I come."

Third Week—First Day

INVESTING WHAT BELONGS TO ANOTHER

It is evident that the difference between God's stewardship and our own lies in the fact that God *voluntarily* set all his own resources to the grand task of the regeneration and development of man, while we are only asked to use, for the same purpose, not what is our own but what has been freely given us, in trust by a loving Father.

And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. . . . And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.

—Luke 12:42-43, 48*b*

Right here is found the reason for the shortsightedness of the so-called "self-made man" who cannot see beyond the practice of *human* ownership. *"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?* (I Cor. 4:7*b*.) We laugh at little Jack Horner, who "put in his thumb and drew out a plum" from the pie *he did not make,* and cried, "What a big boy am I!" But, after all, there is not a great distance between the childishness of that small boy and that of the grown-up child who gloats over what he "owns" and what he has done "all myself."

An illustration of how this blindness to the sovereign ownership of God kills the sense of stewardship can be found almost any day in the magazines or newspapers: "Why, my old dad built this business from the ground up; built it with his keen Yankee brain; and in doing that he gave this town the biggest shove it ever had. He always paid good wages, and he looked out for his men, but he knew who *owned* the shop, you bet, and who ran it! He hadn't any partner until he took me in, and when Tom undertakes to tell me that I have got any partners outside of himself, I figure it is up to me to prove he is mistaken,—even if I have to show him that I haven't any partner at all." The contrast between this quotation from a magazine story and Jesus' parable of the good steward is perfectly evident. Our Lord teaches that the *recognition of God as the Chief Partner is fundamental to any successful life.*

READ LUKE 12:42-48

Shall I hold on with both hands to every paltry possession? All I have teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

We must not approach the principle of tithing from any narrow or legalized standpoint, but surely we should dedi-

cate to the service of God at least one tenth of our income as an acknowledgment of God's ownership of all.

—J. J. Stowe

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

O gracious and patient Jesus, take, we pray thee, the blindness from our eyes that we may see and prize the honor thou hast conferred in making us stewards of God, that we may truly realize that "Every man is wholly God's own portion by the title of creation" so all our labors and cares, all our powers and faculties, must be wholly employed in the service of God and even all the days of our life, that this life being ended we may live with him forever.

—Jeremy Taylor

Third Week—Second Day

FELLOWSHIP OF STEWARDSHIP

Jesus also taught that the obligation of stewardship rested not only on the fact of God's sovereign ownership but *upon the heritage left by other stewards who had labored as fellow workers with God* in his task of world redemption. Indeed, this latter truth is at the basis of any real patriotism. This is the thought in the background of Lincoln's address at Gettysburg: "In a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our power to add or detract. . . .

It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work . . ." In similar vein recall John McCrae's oft-quoted words:

> To you from failing hands we throw
> The torch; be yours to hold it high.
> If ye break faith with us who die
> We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
> In Flanders fields.

In such noble appeals as these from the old to the new generation we have a mighty challenge. From the beginning God has preserved a noble succession of the good stewards of God. While Jesus' parable of the vineyard has its individual application, fundamentally it is a patriotic appeal to national responsibility for the Kingdom of God. The Owner set up a wonderful vineyard and entrusted it to chosen people. He built walls about it for protection, and made every provision for a fruit-bearing nation. He sent his prophets to exhort and warn and instruct; at the last he sent his own Son to remind them of their mission.

Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive his fruits. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them in like manner. But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

—Matthew 21:33-37

READ MATTHEW 21:33-46

Since the dominion of man was first asserted over the ocean, three thrones of mark above all others have been set

upon its sands: the thrones of Tyre, of Venice, and of England. Of the first, only the memory remains; of the second, the ruins; the third, which inherits their greatness, if she forgets their example may be led through a prouder eminence to a less pitiless destruction.

—JOHN RUSKIN

For the youth they gave and the blood they gave,
For the strength that was our stay,
For every marked or nameless grave
On the shell-torn Flanders way—
We who are whole of body and soul,
We have a debt to pay!

For the youth they gave and the blood they gave
We must render back the due;
For every marked or nameless grave
We must pay with a service true;
Till the scales stand straight with even weight,
And the world is a world made new.

—THEODOSIA GARRISON

O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest thy people like a flock, lead us this day! We thank thee for the night; but standing on the threshold of the day, we shrink back but for thee. The tasks are so great, and we are so small. The burdens are so heavy, and we are so weak. Surely the responsibilities are greater than we can bear alone. Let thy Heavenly Spirit sustain us with thy power, making us to be not unworthy sons of thy servants, our fathers, so that, like them having borne the burdens in the heat of the day, we may at last be led into thy Presence, face to face with Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Week—Third Day

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

WHILE Jesus teaches that God's ownership, together with the heritage left us from the past, furnishes an

all-sufficient basis for man's stewardship, yet he clearly points out the *need of the world* as the compelling and immediate challenge to stewardship. "Am I my brother's keeper?" can never be a fit question on the lips of a Christian. John has learned the lesson from his Master when he says, "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (I John 3:17). Here is a terrifying deduction that the Church has only partially considered.

Some years ago, in the hour of the great world need, Herbert Hoover said of the people in the United States: "The nation spends at least a million dollars a day, or three hundred and sixty-five million dollars a year, in superfluous eating at hotels and restaurants." Condemnation in the statement lay not only in the waste of money but in the waste at a time when vast multitudes were starving to death in the near and farther East. While public opinion has been Christianized sufficiently in America to be ashamed when some mother and her brood are found starved or frozen in one of our cities, yet the challenge of human need has not awakened very widely the passion for stewardship except in our own front yards. The heart of man admits the claim of any "real need," but still asks, "Who is my neighbor?" The stewardship passion that Jesus possessed and would impart to us will be able to cross oceans, penetrate industry, and recognize spiritual as well as material needs.

But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. . . . But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to

him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

—Luke 10:29; 33-34

READ LUKE 10:25-37

Dear Dr. O——: It seems to me that the dear church at home has not yet seen these things. If they had, they would not leave me alone in this district in this day. There ought to be at least three missionaries; now there is only one. There is no one coming on, no one learning the language, no one getting India into his life with all that it means to a missionary. Please understand, I am not complaining of you. Bless your heart! You are doing all that a man can do, and we appreciate that, but I only wish that the church could see and realize this unparalleled opportunity. Somehow, today I am broken-hearted. We seem so far away from America, and I am almost asking myself, "Do the people at home care?"

—From a missionary's letter

They may not need me,
  Yet they might;
I'll let my heart be
  Just in sight—

A smile so small
  As mine might be
Precisely their
  Necessity.

—Author unknown

Gracious Father, help me this day to be aware of the needs of others. They are just as hungry as I am; they need as I do some word of encouragement, some expression of human interest. Let me be thy messenger today. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Third Week—Fourth Day

SONSHIP AND STEWARDSHIP

THE introduction to this chapter declared that in Jesus' teachings *there is no conflict between stewardship and sonship.* The loyal son will not shirk his stewardship. It is significant that Jesus, who so strongly insisted on the sovereignty of the Creator, is the very one who has taught the world to think of God as the heavenly Father. More than forty times in Matthew's Gospel alone is it recorded that Jesus so speaks of the "Father." Although the expression is also used several times in the Old Testament, it was, in fact, a new and wonderful revelation from the lips of the Master. From the beginning God yearned that men should cry out to him as "Father."

> Father, I stretch my hands to thee;
> No other help I know.

Now it might be supposed, and frequently is, that the son is exempt from the exactions of stewardship. Said a very pious-speaking soul in central New York: "I cannot think that my dear heavenly Father is so exacting as to want me to set apart a portion of my income for the Kingdom. Why, that takes the joy out of religion for me." It might be added that there are many others whose religious rapture is cooled when money is mentioned, but it is not the fault of a good God. Did Jesus come to abolish or fulfill the law? Is there any difference between the stewardship of the Old Testament and that of the New, other than that in the one instance the compulsion is of law and in the other, of love? But can one refuse to obey the law for love's sake? Can love abolish the law?

The prodigal son will always find his Father's arms outstretched to him; but if he returns *it must always*

be with full recognition of the sovereignty of his Father—and it must be a return to a faithful stewardship. No slacker can be happy in God's household.

But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

—Luke 15:17-20

READ LUKE 15:17-24

One who is so far gone in "grace" as not to obey the law is an undesirable citizen, whether in the civil or in the religious kingdom.

—COLONEL E. W. HALFORD

A true mother is never half as sentimentally altruistic toward her child as a grandmother or an aunt; she does not hesitate to reprove and correct when that is what the child needs to suppress the low and lazy, and arouse the higher and stronger self.

—DR. T. DEWITT HYDE

I am a child in the darkness,
A little frightened child.
The winds are moaning about me,
And the storm in my heart is wild.
My fear would increase to terror,
Only wherever I stand,
It is mine to feel, for my comfort,
The clasp of my Father's hand.

—MARIANNE FARNINGHAM

Infinite and Holy One, whom we know as our Father and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we de-

voutly thank thee for the mercy that created us from dust, and for the greater mercy that has created us anew by thy heavenly adoption as thy children. . . . Grant, we pray, that thy loving kindness may be followed by our obedience; and do thou confirm our best purposes by renewing our sense of thy presence, that we may both keep thy hand and accept thy dealings with us in the spirit of childlike trust, and by the help of that dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—Author unknown

Third Week—Fifth Day

THE STEWARD'S FUTURE

JESUS taught that a man may dare to trust God and do right. It is fundamental in Jesus' philosophy of life that *the future of the faithful steward is provided for.* It is a vital hour in one's life when one feels this confidence that "the Father knoweth the things" his children have need of. He does not promise luxuries, but he does promise to supply all our *needs,* provided the King's business is kept *first.* The good steward will not seek his own. He says, "I must be about my Father's business." His own future he leaves to the will of God, knowing that only thus can the largest fulfillment of life come for him.

There had been a fight in a certain New England legislature. A pernicious measure had been brought up for passage. A congressman who had violated his conscience and his promise was being reproved by the minority leaders for deserting the moral element of the State. Finally he excused himself by exclaiming, "But a man has to think of his future once in a while." The reply came like a flame—"Then, thank God, I have no future!"

Paul had this confidence when he wrote: "What

things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ" (Phil. 3:7). It has been the repeated tragedy throughout the history of the Church that so few of us have dared to take, at face value, these wonderful promises of our Lord to his disciples.

But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his rightousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

—Matthew 6:30-33

READ MATTHEW 7:21-29

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true; I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right; stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"A man must live." We justify
  Low shift and trick to treason high.
But is it so? Pray, tell me why
  Life at such cost you have to buy.
In what religion were you told,
  "A man must live?"

There are times when a man must die,
  Imagine, for a battle cry
From soldiers, with a sword to hold—
  From soldiers, with the flag unrolled—
The coward's whine, this liar's lie,
  "A man must live."

—CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON

Lord, I know not what I ought to ask of thee; thou only knowest what I need. Thou lovest me better than I know how to love myself. O Father, give to thy child that which he himself knows not how to ask. I dare not ask either for crosses or consolations. I simply present myself before thee, I open my heart to thee. Behold my needs which I know not myself; see and do according to thy tender mercy. Amen.

—FRANÇOIS DE LA MOTHE-FÉNELON

Third Week—Sixth Day

MATERIAL STEWARDSHIP AND THE KINGDOM

WHILE Jesus taught that life consisteth not in the abundance of a man's possessions, he knew that most of us would be tempted to think otherwise. Indeed, the question which we often ask, "What is he worth?" gets an answer which generally indicates that not the moral or spiritual or educational value of the man is in the mind, but his "money," or "property," value. It is not strange that Jesus, knowing the value that man would place on material resources, taught that the average man's attitude toward the kingdom of God could be discovered by his *attitude toward his material possessions.* The same thought is put in the language of a Kentucky physician: "You can tell a man's interest in anything by the way he puts his money into it." If a disciple can keep thinking of his money and his property as belonging to God, then he is apt to keep the Kingdom of God first. Thus the stewardship of money was regarded by Jesus as a first test of stewardship. Jesus said of the unjust steward, "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust *the true riches?*" (Luke 16:11). It was about the same thing as "If you do not keep your money on the altar, how can you be of any

use to the Kingdom?" Or, "How can you have companionship with the Presence?"

The peril involved is splendidly stated in these clear-cut words: "When a Christian begins to make money, God gains a fortune or loses a man." It is a sad fact that few passions are stronger than the love of money; and only when this passion is mastered by the love of the Crucified are men ready to be fit stewards of the Kingdom of God. This fact hinges on the truth that money is liquid personality, and when one withholds his possessions from God he is withholding himself.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

—Luke 16:11-13

READ LUKE 16:1-15

Money talks. It expresses what its possessors actually are. . . . Yes, money talks, and while it is true that it is not on speaking terms with every one, and to many it may only say "Good bye," yet it speaks a various language which reveals the true inwardness of man.

—DAVID MCCONAUGHY

From lust for gain or greed for gold,
Keep me with high and holy mien,
But if the ships of fortune bring
Some precious cargo clear and clean,
Safeguard me in my stewardship
By glimpses of thy great unseen.

From lust for place or pomp or power,
Save me with pure and passionate pride.

Curb not the hunger of my soul,
But keep ambition sanctified.
Safeguard thy steward, Lord, each day,
By visions of thy higher way.

—R. S. C.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sakes became poor, we pray thee to protect them that are rich in this world, that they may not be high-minded nor trust in the uncertain riches, but in thee, the living God, who givest us richly all things to enjoy. Grant them grace so to use their wealth that they may do good, and be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time coming, that they may lay hold on eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—Sursum Corda

Third Week—Seventh Day

PERSONALITY SUPREME

In the preceding study Jesus does not teach that money stewardship is the highest stewardship—only that it is a first necessary step into the larger and richer stewardship of all of life. The highest stewardship, according to Jesus, is that of personality. Are we trustworthy in our dealings and contacts with persons, and with the Supreme Person? Because *persons* are God's supreme creation, Jesus taught that *the highest stewardship is that of life.* In today's scripture Jesus teaches that the bases of his final judgment upon us will be on the question of how we have used life—the life entrusted to us and to our neighbors.

Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or

in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

—Matthew 25:44-46

From the newspapers comes this bit of current history: Three shipwrecked men were drifting off the Atlantic coast in an open boat. A United States Government mail steamer sped by, signaling the anxious castaways that it could not stop because of speed orders. However, the captain did promise to send rescuers. Hours later, upon the arrival of the mail boat in the New York harbor, the shipwrecked sailors were reported, but the captain and the crew that could not stop to save human life were suspended from the service for failure in duty. The reason given was that no order for speedy delivery of mail can supersede the fundamental obligation to save human life.

Personality is the supreme thing in the universe. This is the end of stewardship. God, through the prophets of old, and at last through his own Son, has been trying to love us unto himself, in order that we might love others unto him and the eternal life.

READ MATTHEW 25:31-46

Oh, for God's sake, and the sake of poor souls, bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation. What cause have we to mourn before the Lord that we have so long neglected this good work! If we had but engaged in it sooner, how many more might have been brought to Christ!

—JOHN WESLEY

I searched for love;
I searched in country and in town;
I wept because I could not find
Love anywhere around!

But when I searched to serve
My neighbor, sick and sore,
Lo! there stood Love, the Beautiful,
And knocking at my door!

—R. S. C.

Once more the long light breaks across the eastern sky. Once more a new day challenges us to "Forward, march with God!" Lead thou me on, O Christ. Hold me so close to thee that in my face and from my lips and in my every deed, my fellow pilgrims too may see thy light and know thy presence near. And so, refreshed in thee, they too may forward march with God. Amen.

QUESTIONS

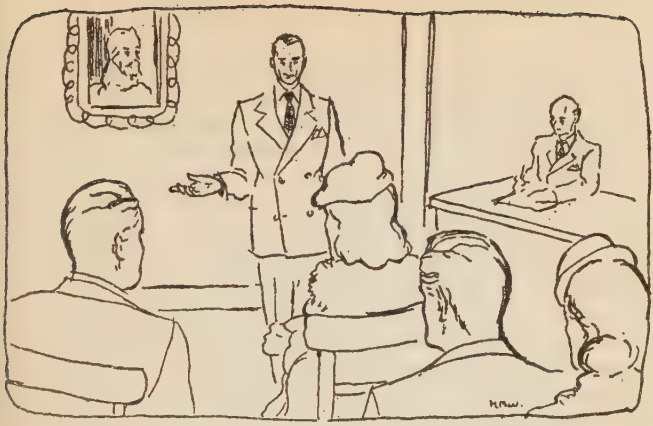
INTRODUCTION.

a) Is there a better word than "steward" for the stewardship relation? What is it?
b) How can it be said that Jesus *recoined* the word "steward"?
c) How may we know God? Should we be satisfied to know his will alone, or his love, or righteousness, or justice, or mercy, or power?
d) What is the difference between conversion and the first step toward an understanding of Christian stewardship?
e) If "the earth is the Lord's," how do we acknowledge it?
f) Point out the different shades of meaning of stewardship found in the different words used by Jesus in addressing those who worked with him.
g) What word expresses the relation you want to maintain with God?

1. INVESTING WHAT BELONGS TO ANOTHER.
a) List all the values you control without any responsibility to others.
b) What happens if you do not invest your talents in any way?

c) How does a Christian steward terminate his stewardship? What are his working hours?

2. Fellowship of Stewardship.
   a) Is there a fellowship of stewardship? Has anyone a right to claim exemption?
   b) What duty owe you to yourself? to God? to your neighbor?
   c) Does the statement "I'm not interested in missions" furnish any ground for refusal to co-operate. Is it a good excuse?
3. My Brother's Keeper.
   a) What test of your Christianity and your stewardship is better than "Am I my brother's keeper?" and "Who is my neighbor?"
   b) Are we responsible for needs we do not know, but could easily know? For knowledge we do not give to others?
   c) What does this mean: "Seek first the kingdom"?
4. Sonship and Stewardship.
   a) How does the faithful administration of stewardship lead to complete sonship?
   b) Where did the prodigal son fail in stewardship?
5. The Steward's Future.
   a) Why may the faithful steward be confident of the future?
   b) What is promised in Matthew 6:30-33, and what is the prerequisite condition?
6. Material Stewardship and the Kingdom.
   a) How true is the claim that "money giving is the truest index we have of a vital human interest"?
   b) "One has a right to do as one likes with one's own." What criticism does such a statement merit?
   c) When money talks, who is responsible for what it says?
7. Personality Supreme.
   a) Why is personality supreme? What was it God "breathed into man" at creation? What did God mean when he said, "Let us make man in our own image"?
   b) Can we estimate a man's character by the way he treats his body?



Chapter IV

Stewardship and Service

A previous chapter states that "stewardship" rather than "service" is God's word for this hour. Indeed, "stewardship" has been God's ultimate word for every generation. We have been slow to receive this truth because we have been slow to acknowledge the sovereign ownership of God, and the scriptural teaching of the Christian stewardship, which is based upon it: God is the owner; man is a steward of his life and all his resources; man must give account for that which has been entrusted to him. In this day when the world is shrinking geographically with terrible rapidity, and when vast numbers of pagan peoples are becoming our next-door neighbors, nothing but a sense of steward-

ship based on the consciousness of a God-given responsibility on the part of the stronger for the weaker peoples, can meet the challenge of the hour. Mere service, as the word is generally interpreted, is utterly inadequate.

The burden of this chapter, then, is to point out that there is a vital difference between stewardship and service. The difference is suggested by the words of the young chaplain who came back to America, declaring, "I am going to live for Jesus Christ hereafter." When asked if he had not previously been living for Jesus Christ, he replied, "Yes, in a way. I have been giving more or less service to him, but what I have been through overseas has opened my eyes. Hereafter he has my life, all in all."

> I give thee back the life I owe,
> That in thine ocean depths its flow
> May richer, fuller be.
>
> —GEORGE MATHESON

But to say that "stewardship" is God's word for this age is by no means to discount the importance of service. Rather it is our purpose to rescue the word from the commercial environment into which it has fallen, and to point out the higher motive which should prompt all service. Considering the ultimate necessity of christianizing business, we might get satisfaction from such signs as "Quick Service," "Dependable Service," "Service with a Smile"; but it becomes more and more necessary—lest we commercialize religion—to discover the service that is exhorted in Scripture. In the first place, Jesus taught that his followers were to do service in the name of the Master. "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me." (Mark 9:37.) And he adds, "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose

his reward" (Mark 9:41). The same thought is emphasized in Matthew 10:42: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward." The point emphasized by our Lord is that the Christian is not doing service in his own name, but "because ye are Christ's." Behind these statements is Jesus' consciousness that his disciple belongs to God both by redemption and by creation.

Here is the real basis for the distinction between some so-called philanthropists and givers of charity, and the Christian steward. The one gives in his own name, or because of his sense of human pity; the other gives because all that he has is a trust from Heaven to be used for others.

In California a great redwood tree towers majestically up into the heavens *to the glory of God,* who through many centuries has fed it and loved it. And yet some human authority has dared to appropriate that glorious handiwork of the Almighty and has engraved on it "Dedicated to the Memory of ———." One wonders if somebody lost his sense of humor or his sense of God, or both! Just so, numerous men and women, both in and out of the Kingdom, *in their own name,* and *to their own glory* are making gifts, more or less generous, of money and service, all of which ought to be dedicated to the glory of Him who out of his boundless resources has given us all these things. Thus, while there are many differences between ordinary "service" and "stewardship," the outstanding distinction of the Christian steward is that whatever he gives of service or money is given *in the name of his Lord.*

It is only a step from the above considerations to the important scriptural doctrine that salvation is by faith alone. Evidently, no man can pay his way into the

kingdom of God by any service he can render if Jesus' declaration is to be accepted: "When he shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10). It is easy to see where the hymn writer found authority to sing:

> In my hand no price I bring;
> Simply to thy cross I cling.

Only that person who has deceived himself into thinking that he has any wealth of money or service that he can *give* God, fails to see the matchless glory and comfort of such hymns as these:

> Just as I am, without one plea,
> But that thy blood was shed for me,
> And that thou bidst me come to thee,
> O Lamb of God, I come—I come.

The fundamental principle of stewardship is that God, by creation and redemption, is the real owner of all material and spiritual resources. What has a man to give God? Nothing but a surrendered will and the loving obedience of the good steward. Is it not apparent that there can be no "service" pleasing to God which is not the expression or confession of stewardship?

Fourth Week—First Day

THE BUSINESS OF LIFE

STEWARDSHIP is service regarded not as an avocation but as the *main business of life.* In today's scripture Paul is speaking as a layman. He would have been clearly justified in claiming support from the church at Ephesus while he preached to them the gospel, but peculiar circumstances made it advisable for him to stand as a layman among laymen. He made tents for a

living, but there was no question about his main business.

Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. . . . I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

—Acts 20:31, 33-35

"What was the matter back there?" inquired a passenger on the Illinois Central to his friend the conductor.

"Oh, I was doing a little of the Master's business," replied the conductor. "That woman whose face you do not like was trying to select a boarding place for those girls who are going into the city to work for the first time. I told them that my wife would be at the station and they could stay with us tonight and until they found the right kind of place."

"That is a fine thing for you to do!" exclaimed the passenger. "And rather exceptional for a man in your busy life."

The passenger has recorded that the conductor replied: "That is my business. I feel that I am not only responsible to the Illinois Central for the comfort of my passengers but I have a certain responsibility to Jesus Christ for their souls. My business is to serve Jesus Christ. I am working for the Illinois Central to cover expenses."

READ ACTS 20:25-35

His wealth was a sacred trust; he was but the steward to administer it, and the more that was poured into his lap,

the greater were his obligations. There was no plainer duty, as there was no higher joy, than to bestow upon others some portion of that which the Great Giver and Benefactor had bestowed upon him. With such a principle once settled in his mind and formed into habit, it was no effort for him to give away money. It did not cost him a struggle every time he was asked to contribute to some good cause. On the contrary, it was a pleasure to give. He sought for opportunities.

—From WILLIAM E. DODGE; THE CHRISTIAN MERCHANT

Rest is not quitting
The busy career;
Rest is the fitting
Of self to its sphere.

'Tis loving and serving,
The highest and best:
'Tis onward, unswerving—
And that is true rest!

—JOHN SULLIVAN DWIGHT

Eternal God, who committest to us the swift and solemn trust of life; since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of thy holy will; not waiting for tomorrow, but yielding today. . . . Consecrate with thy presence the way our feet may go; in all things draw us to the mind of Christ, that thy lost image may be traced again, and thou mayst own us as at one with him and thee. Amen.

—JAMES MARTINEAU

Fourth Week—Second Day

HEROIC SERVICE

JUST because a Christian's stewardship is the main business of his life, Jesus demands that his service shall be *heroic enough not to falter at any cost.* As David

declared, "I will not offer the Eternal my God burnt offerings that have cost me nothing" (II Samuel 24:24*b* —Moffatt), so the Christian steward will refuse to classify charity balls, "benefit" parties, and the like, as *service* to the King and the Kingdom. The woman who replied, "Oh, I really cannot be tied down to a Sunday school class," and the well-groomed man who tries to "tip" God with a quarter or perhaps a half-dollar on Sundays, have a good deal in common with the so-called charitable person who does a little "service" for humanity without making any appreciable inroad on either his time or his income.

Lord, let me not be too content
With life in trifling service spent.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?

—Matthew 16:24-26

During the first World War a certain mother in Michigan found it easy and natural to do some service, along with other women, for the Red Cross. But one day her own son came to obtain consent to enlist in the army. Then came the struggle of her life. The battle was won only after a long night of agony in prayer. In the morning she said, "God showed me that unless I could surrender all that I have to my country, never again could I look up at the flag of my fathers and sing with honesty,

'My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty.'"

That mother, with thousands of others, learned the difference between a little service, given with more or

less inconvenience to self, and the deeper consecration of the things most precious.

READ MATTHEW 16:21-27

The practical weakness of the vast mass of modern pity for the poor and the oppressed is precisely that it is merely pity; the pity is pitiful, but not respectful. Men feel that the cruelty to the poor is a kind of cruelty to animals. They never feel that it is injustice to equals—nay, it is treachery to comrades.

—G. K. CHESTERTON

At length when the war's at an end,
  And we are just ourselves, you and I,
And we gather our lives up to mend,
  We, who've learned how to live and to die;
Shall we think of the old ambition,
  For riches, or how to grow wise,
When, like Lazarus freshly arisen,
  We've the presence of death in our eyes?

—ERIC DAWSON

Blessed Lord, who wast tempted in all things like as we are, have mercy upon our frailty. Out of weakness give us strength. Grant to us thy fear, that we may fear thee only. Support us in time of temptation. Embolden us in the time of danger. Help us to do thy work with good courage and to continue thy faithful soldiers and servants unto our life's end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—BISHOP B. F. WESTCOTT

Fourth Week—Third Day

RIGHT RELATION TO GOD

JESUS' philosophy of stewardship lifts service to a new level by making it consequent upon *the right*

attitude toward God and his sovereign ownership of all things. As we have clearly seen, it makes all the difference *in whose name* service is rendered. Jesus himself was most careful to give glory to the name of the Father: "Hallowed be thy Name." And honor and glory belong to God, for "Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves." The disciple must never forget that he serves for his Lord. On this point Jesus insisted: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42). Paul likewise emphasized that the service of the Christian steward must be superior to that of the mere philanthropist, for *he is not representing himself,* and he realizes that whatever he gives has first been given to him *in trust.*

Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. . . . What hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?

—I Corinthians 4:1-2, 7

READ I CORINTHIANS 3:18-23

Then there is the danger of the high cost of life that we are spending so lavishly, largely in the effort to finance the Kingdom task without the tithe. . . . The ministry today is nervously overwrought through the ceaseless effort to extract money without pain from folks who are not stewards of their wealth.

—WILLIAM H. PHELPS

There is nothing so small but that we honor God by asking his guidance of it, or insult him by taking it into our own hands.

—JOHN RUSKIN

When I stand some day at the Judgment,
And the books are all thrown open wide,
Not the deeds that I've done
Nor the laurels I've won,
Only this will I plead,
I have tried!

Aye, this be the power of my pleading
To the Judge with the Hands Crucified,
Not my laurels nor bars,
But the depth of my scars;
Yea, this will I plead,
I have tried!

—R. S. C.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do thy will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Fourth Week—Fourth Day

RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD JESUS

MOREOVER, stewardship lifts service to a new level by *properly relating it to Jesus Christ,* who was the gift of God's love. Or it might be said that Christian stewardship is service plus the love motive. "Isn't that little boy too heavy for you to carry?" asked a passer-by of a little girl bending backward under her burden. "Oh, no," came the answer, "for he is my brother." The incident is suggestive of the loving gratitude that a disciple has to Christ, and that is the greatest motive to service that the world can know.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.
—II Corinthians 5:14-15

Andrew Gillies, in *The Individualistic Gospel,* reviewed the claim that was advanced in certain quarters during the first World War that the American soldier facing death on the battlefield does not need to make a confession of his faith in God in order to be saved, and asked: "Does the act of fighting in a good cause automatically put a man on good terms with God and assure him of salvation, in spite of the fact that he has no conscious faith, and regardless of his personal character?" Dr. Gillies answered this question in the negative; and Joyce Kilmer, before he was killed in France, refuted the assumption that either soldier or civilian, by service however heroic, could gain Heaven's favor regardless of the right relation to God in Christ. As the poet soldier Joyce Kilmer cried out, "My shoulders ache beneath my pack," he remembered the march to Calvary, and silenced his own pain by replying:

Lie easier, cross, upon His back.
. . . . . .
My rifle hand is stiff and numb,
From Thy pierced palm red rivers come!
Lord, thou didst suffer more for me
Than all the hosts of land or sea,
So let me render back again
This millionth of thy gift. Amen.

Overwhelmed by this love of Christ, the Apostle Paul pointed out that no one can return any acceptable service to God until first he feels the profound truth of the scripture:

Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.

—I Corinthians 6:19*b*-20

READ II CORINTHIANS 5:17-21

What matters death if freedom be not dead?
No flags are fair, if freedom's flag be furled.
Who fights for freedom goes with joyful tread
To meet the fires of hell against him hurled,
And has for Captain him whose thorn-wreathed head
Smiles from the Cross upon a conquered world.

—JOYCE KILMER

If we have whispered truth,
Whisper no longer;
Speak as the tempest does,
Sterner and stronger.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst humble thyself to become man, and to be born into the world for our salvation, teach us the grace of humility, root out of our hearts all pride and haughtiness, and so fashion us after thy holy likeness in this world, that in the world to come we may be made like unto thee; for thine own name and mercies' sake. Amen.

—BISHOP WALSHAM HOW

Fourth Week—Fifth Day

SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

CHRISTIAN stewardship lifts service above mere pity and generosity by giving it a commanding objective which is nothing short of *the spiritual regeneration of men and nations.* Thus stewardship differs from philanthropy and mere service in its fundamental purpose. Stewardship does not serve merely because of

spasms of emotion but because of the profound conviction that the steward is called to reconcile man to God.

But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ.

—II Corinthians 5:18-20*a*

A modern poet has written with a careless burst of tolerance:

So many gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind,
When just the art of being kind
Is all the sad world needs.

Kindness is indeed the need of the world, but kindness was born out of the heart of God and can flourish only where there is the right attitude toward him. Moreover, kindness that merely ministers to the physical, or even moral, needs falls short of consummation. Every great crisis in history emphasizes the futility of service that does not point to Jesus Christ. This is the only ultimate explanation of such words as these of Henry Watterson: "The paramount question underlying the issue of democracy is the religion of Jesus Christ. Eliminate Christ and you leave the earth to eternal war."

READ II CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

I hold such creeds to be earthbound and futile,
Vain breathings of a sentimental clod,
That fail to turn the face to Christ the Saviour,
Or point a hungry heart to God.

My heart is hungry for a Presence,
Some Living One to lift me from the sod;
My creed must tell of more than human doings,
My creed must lift my lonely heart to God!
—R. S. C.

We might as well make an experiment with the teachings of Jesus Christ, as almost everything else has been tried and failed. I am no more a Christian than Pilate was; and yet I am ready to admit that after contemplating the world of human nature for nearly sixty years I see no way out of the world's misery but the way of Christ's will.
—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Blessed Lord Jesus, who hast said that except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot see the kingdom of heaven, purify our hearts, we beseech thee, that, having been redeemed by thy most precious blood, we may know indeed the changed heart and the transfigured life. Give to us, we pray thee, such conviction of thy power to bring light out of darkness, joy out of despair, and victory out of defeat, and of thy eternal readiness so to transform all who will truly abandon themselves unto thee, that, trusting in thy Holy Spirit, we may this day and always be living evangels of thy power to save. Amen.

Fourth Week—Sixth Day

ETERNAL DUTY

STEWARDSHIP lifts service into a high atmosphere of eternal duty safe from the softening influences of convenience and self-indulgence. It is true that the steward will see ecstatic moments when the severest crosses will be easily carried on a flood of divine emotion, but ordinarily it is not so. Stern duty must be marshaled to

bear us on. There is much behind Paul's cry "I have a stewardship entrusted to me."

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.

—I Corinthians 9:16-17

Reading between the lines of this scripture, we can hear Paul saying: "I have a stewardship. I cannot get away from this ever-present trust. In my waking hours it presses on me; when I am asleep it stirs me in my dreams. I have something to do. I have something to be. It is my task, and no one else can do my work. If I don't do it, it will not be done. God help me, I have a stewardship. It is God-given, and some day I will have to answer to my Maker."

In the diary which Captain Scott, the Antarctic explorer, left to posterity is the following reference to that last terrible day: "We must be near the end. I have decided that it shall be natural. We shall march for the depot with or without our effects and die in our tracks!" This is another example of the spirit which Paul portrays in today's scripture: I have a stewardship entrusted to me, and I must and will be true.

READ LUKE 9:51, 57-62

Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work and forced to do your best will breed in you temperance, self-control, diligence, strength of will, content, and a hundred virtues which the idle will never know.

—CHARLES KINGSLEY

Out of the shame of my coward heart,
Out of my night of defeat,
Lift me, O God, to the battle again;
Cover my bitter retreat!

Out of despising my weakness and rout,
Out of Thy love for my soul,
Purge me, oh purge, with Thy hyssop, dear Christ,
Give me my spirit made whole!

Beaten, but still undefeated, I pray,
Thou of unconquerable hand,
Reach me my poor broken saber again;
I pledge thee to die or to stand!

By the wonder of Heaven's forgiveness,
By the lovely lure of Thy light,
By Thy Spirit of victory eternal,
God fling me again to the fight!

—R. S. C.

O Lord God, give me the desire to be persistent in service while I have the health and strength. May I experience the sweetness that comes in doing the thing that I ought to have done as well as that in which I took the most pleasure. Help me so to live that my days may be thy days; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

—Margaret Bird Steinmetz

Fourth Week—Seventh Day

A FRIENDLY INVITATION

Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.

—John 15:14-15

Stewardship is an invitation to serve *as friends with God,* not as servants. It took Jesus a long time to bring his disciples into even such partial sympathy with his program that he could say, as he does in today's scripture, "No longer do I call you servants: . . . but I have called you friends." Notice that Jesus indicates that one difference between the good steward and the servant lies in the steward's knowing "what his lord doeth." In other words, closer friendship with the Lord grows in proportion as we share with him his purpose to redeem all people in all the world.

Is not the failure of many "good" church members to get joy out of their religion the result of holding Jesus at a distance through unreadiness to sympathize with his world program? "Lo, I am with you always" is the assurance of the Great Friend, but the promise is conditioned upon acceptance of the stewardship of the Great Commission.

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.

—Matthew 28:19-20

READ JOHN 15:16-20

"The idea of Alice wanting to be a missionary!" This was the calloused exclamation of one of our church women whose daughter, recently returned from the Silver Bay Summer Conference, announced to her parents the new conviction of her life. "We can give Alice anything she wants. She can travel around the world if that's it; but this idea of a daughter of mine being a missionary! Let some girl go to China who does not have all these things." What could I say to a professing Christian of this kind whose mind and soul revealed so little sensitiveness to the great business of Christ?"

—From a pastor's diary

Set us afire, Lord,
  Stir us, we pray.
While the world perishes,
  We go our way,
Purposeless, passionless,
  Day after day.
Set us afire, Lord,
  Stir us, we pray.

—R. S. C.

O Lord, renew our spirits and draw our hearts unto thyself that our work may not be to us a burden, but a delight; and give us such a mighty love to thee as may sweeten all our obedience. Oh, let us not serve thee with the spirit of bondage as slaves, but with the cheerfulness and gladness of children, delighting ourselves in thee, and rejoicing in thy work. Amen.

—Benjamin Jenks

QUESTIONS

Introduction.

a) What is the difference between stewardship and service?
b) Can there be Christian stewardship without sacrifice? What is sacrifice?
c) What is the divine deposit in us that cannot be touched by catastrophe?
d) What is the Christian steward's idea of being saved?
e) Why do we find the utmost reward when we "seek first the Kingdom"?
f) How reconcile the scriptural teaching that salvation is by faith with Christ's insistence upon faithful stewardship?
g) What can you give God?

1. The Business of Life.
   a) What part of life may we omit from stewardship, and remain Christian?

b) For whom are we responsible, and in what measure?

2. Heroic Service.
   a) Is there any such thing as an "easy going" Christian life?

3. Right Relation to God.
   a) What difference do motive and vision make in the results of our work?
   b) Why should the Christian's work be done in a superior manner?

4. Right Attitude Toward Jesus.
   a) In what ways may we confess that we are God's children?
   b) Does the act of fighting in a good cause automatically put a man on good terms with God?
   c) How are love and service related? May they be separated?

5. Spiritual Regeneration.
   a) What is the personal transformation known as the "new birth"?
   b) Among virtues, what rank would you give to kindness?
   c) What is the first thing to do in order to become a Christian steward?

6. Eternal Duty.
   a) How may we know the joy of the Lord, and find in it our strength?
   b) Where lies our greatest pleasure—in duty, partnership, or independent action?

7. A Friendly Invitation.
   a) What is the highest relation possible between persons?
   b) Why do not comforts and other "things" satisfy? What does?

Chapter V

Pentecost and Stewardship

Pentecost introduced a new and victorious chapter in the story of human stewardship. Pentecost brought a new sense of God's sovereign ownership, a greater vision of his unswerving purpose to make a new world of regenerated men, an intenser consciousness of a lofty calling to be fellow workers with Christ, a deeper abhorrence of sin, a more real sense of brotherhood, and a more joyous comradeship with God, together with a high indifference to pain or poverty or persecution, and an inner assurance of power to meet every demand, and to make certain the final victory. These were some of the net results of the day of Pentecost.

These results are best seen in their contrasts. The

man who remarked, "These Christians are the most unromantic of people," had never read the romance of the early church as told in the Acts of the Apostles. Elliott E. Mills in these splendid lines has suggested both the romance and the contrast:

> O palefaced Theologian, whose soft hands
> And ink-stained fingers never grasped the oar
> Or swung the hammer; weary with your books,
> How can your slumbering senses comprehend
> The breadth and virile purpose of the men
> Who bore their joyous tale through quickened lands
> To the great heart of Rome; the shipwrecked Paul,
> Wandering Ulysses-like to far-off isles,
> And barbarous peoples; or those peasant kings,
> Who ever 'mid voluptuous cities wore
> No mediaeval halo, but the air
> Of some free fisher battling with the wind
> That blows across the Galilean hills?

It is evident that the "shipwrecked Paul, wandering Ulysses-like to far-off isles" is a different man from the Saul who went everywhere persecuting the churches; nor is the Peter of Pentecost the same who formerly followed Jesus "afar off." What has happened? Plainly this: God has come to the climactic act in his own voluntary stewardship. From the beginning, all of his divine resources had been dedicated to the welfare of his creatures. His dominating passion had been expressed in his words "Let us make man *in our image,* after our likeness." It was an eternal undertaking. God called man to share with him this stewardship. Then the fight began. Robert Browning sums it up thus:

> No, when the fight begins within himself,
> A man's worth something: God stoops o'er his head,
> Satan looks up between his feet—both tug—
> He's left, himself, i' the middle; the soul wakes
> And grows. Prolong that battle through his life!

But man's stewardship was not only to build manhood within himself but likewise to build it in the great world of other men. A perfect world of perfect men was God's goal. Slowly but surely, through the long centuries, the vision had grown clearer. The patriarch, the prophet, and, last of all, Christ himself proclaiming the program. The disciples saw it vaguely, but even the little that they understood brought terror to their hearts. How could the disciples of a crucified Lord conquer the world? Easter morning helped to clear their minds and to strengthen their faith. But even that walk back from the hill, from which their Lord had gone from them up into the clouds, to that upper room where they were to "tarry" for future orders, was more of a funeral procession than the march of soldiers. What they needed was a still clearer conception of their task, and especially some *heavenly power to energize them for their great commission. And Pentecost was God's answer.* They were *filled* with the Holy Ghost. Henceforth they were imitators of God in the dedication of self and substance for the regeneration of the world, and in their lives God reigned supreme.

Holy Spirit, all divine,
Dwell within this heart of mine;
Cast down every idol-throne,
Reign supreme, and reign alone.

In just what particulars the Holy Spirit deepened the stewardship conviction of the disciples will be indicated in the daily readings, but we ought first to consider an important question: If the coming of the Holy Spirit deepened and empowered the sense of stewardship in the early church, may it not be true that the shallowness of stewardship conviction in the church of today is due to the failure of professing Christians to obey the Lord's commandment to "tarry"

and be filled with the Spirit? This seems to have been the conclusion of J. H. Jowett (*The Passion for Souls*): "I am deeply persuaded that, judged experimentally by our daily life and practice, much of the mental attitude and spiritual poise of the modern church is pre-Pentecostal, and that in this thin and immature relationship is to be found the secret of our common weariness and impotence."

It will help further to understand the condition of many a modern church and present-day disciple, if one will make the comparison with that ancient church of Ephesus where a small membership was attempting to carry on without the leadership or the power of the Holy Spirit. It was a glad day when Paul promptly sized up the situation and asked, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" Dr. Jowett further comments:

> Why did he put the anxious question? Were there some ominous signs of impoverishment which aroused this painful wonder? Did he miss something? . . . I know not what the signs may have been, but some conspicuous gap yawned before the apostle's penetrating vision, which prompted him to ask this trembling, searching question, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" and the half-spirited and wearied souls replied, "Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given!" How imperfect their equipment! How inadequate their resources! . . . The day of Pentecost had come; the marvelous promises had been fulfilled; the wonder-ministry had begun; but these disciples were still in the pre-Pentecostal days; they were behind the spiritual times!

But what of the present hour? Need we go back to the Ephesians for examples of powerless churches and powerless disciples? Some years ago Frank W. Gunsaulus wrote:

> The most incongruous, if not ridiculous, sight in this practical world is a fine machine standing in its polished

beauty, but lacking just the one thing that gives it motive power or even permits motion. . . . The instant and commanding thing to be accomplished in the life of Christian people today—and if I could have my way, this would be what I would see achieved in every soul—is the experienced presence of God as the Holy Spirit. It is Pentecost which the church needs at once and forever.

Fifth Week—First Day

PRACTICAL UNDERSTANDING

INTO this Universe, and Why not Knowing
Nor Whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not Whither, willy-nilly blowing.

This fatalism of Fitzgerald's pagan poet is as far removed from the conviction that filled the hearts of the disciples at Pentecost as the East is from the West. The men who preached that day in Jerusalem knew why they were in the world, and what they had come to do. In the first place, Pentecost deepened the stewardship conviction of the disciples *by bringing to their remembrance what Jesus had told them concerning their mission and his gospel.* During the long months the great Teacher had patiently worked with his disciples, continuously instructing them in the face of small encouragement, but confidently waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when all the dormant seed which he had sown would come to life and fruition under the miraculous influence of the Spirit of God. The confidence of Jesus that such would be the case is seen in these words spoken shortly before his death, indicating the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men:

These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom

the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.

—John 14:25-26

READ JOHN 14:25-31

I worship thee, O Holy Ghost,
I love to worship thee;
My risen Lord for aye were lost
But for thy company.

"I worship thee, O Holy Ghost,
I love to worship thee;
With thee each day is Pentecost,
Each night Nativity."

—WILLIAM F. WARREN

The missionary enterprise waits for the day when the Holy Spirit shall pervade and dominate the Church of Christ, and the Holy Spirit waits for the day when the church shall be willing.

—ROBERT E. SPEER

O Thou, who hast promised that when the enemy sweeps in like a flood thou wilt lift the barrier of thy Spirit against him, have mercy upon us and deliver us from our sins. In the hour of unusual weakness be thou our unusual strength. As confidence in self decreases, suffer us not to be overwhelmed save by the wideness of thy mercy and the promise of thy power. Forgive us the multitude of our transgressions, but help us that we may not presume upon thy mercy. O thou abounding Love, save us both from lying defeated amidst out failures or from presuming to shift to thy shoulder the crosses we should bear. Gird us once more to the battle. Give power once again to our broken swords. Renew the battle song within our hearts, hold steadfastly before us thy vision of the heights, and

give us this day the victory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fifth Week—Second Day

PERSONAL ASSOCIATION WITH GOD

PENTECOST strengthened the stewardship conviction in the disciples by *deepening the consciousness that they were God's personal agents in the fulfillment of his ancient promises* to the patriarchs and the prophets.

There is a *fellowship of stewardship.* A "cloud of witnesses" are looking on to see how we write our chapter of the story of the working out of the eternal program that God first gave to them. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," said Peter in explanation of the happenings of Pentecost. The disciples were merely in the succession—the endless succession of the stewards of God.

This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:
And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
That I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams:
Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days
Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
—Acts 2:16-18

We should recall that Joel was not alone in prophesying concerning the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It was "long promised" (Eph. 1:13). It was

foretold in the Old Testament. It was re-emphasized by John the Baptist. It was held before the disciples by Jesus himself. In the mind of the Master so critically important is this rapidly approaching fulfillment of The Promise that Luke says Jesus commanded his disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they had experienced the great hour.

READ ACTS 2:14-21

I regard the Pentecost at Jerusalem as the type and prophecy of Pentecost all through the history of the Church of God. . . . So in this sense we are justified in looking for other Pentecosts in history that shall not only be like the first Pentecost at Jerusalem but greater than that in results as that was greater in results than any work of the Spirit that went before.

—ARTHUR T. PIERSON

While kings of eternal evil
  Yet darken the hills about,
Thy part is with the broken sabre
  To rise on the last redoubt;
To fear not sensible failure;
  Nor covet the game at all,
But fighting, fighting, fighting,
  Die, driven against the wall.

—LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

O Living Christ, help us to remember that they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. We repeat the words, but do we believe them? Without thee, O Spirit of Jesus, our activity is in vain. We are busy about nothing unless thy Spirit is leading and thy power is present. Help us to learn that "we can do more than pray after we have prayed, but that we cannot do more than pray until we have prayed." Forgive us that we are so slow of heart to learn. Amen.

Fifth Week—Third Day

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

THE New Testament distinguishes between being born of the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. Frequently does the phrase "filled with the Holy Ghost" or "filled with the Holy Spirit" appear in the book of Acts. Certainly the apostles were converted men before Pentecost, but after they were "filled with the Holy Spirit" we see on many matters changed attitudes which were nothing short of miraculous.

And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

—Acts 2:1, *4a*

If we seek to analyze the changed attitude of these disciples, we would first of all say there was a new courage in them! No longer did they huddle behind closed doors. Peter no longer followed Jesus "afar off." He "stood up"! And all of them began to speak "as the Spirit gave them utterance." All Jerusalem felt the power of their testimony. The promises of Jesus had come to pass: "Ye shall receive power" and "ye shall be my witnesses." Now they had power to dare to speak, and they had something wonderful to tell. Pentecost had transformed them into stewards of the gospel. As Paul later said, "Let a man so account of us, as . . . stewards of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. 4:1).

READ ACTS 1:1-12

Challenge thy people, Jehovah of hosts!
Speak as of old at this hour:
Silence alike their complaints and their boasts,
Challenge thy people with power.

Give them a task that will drain their heart's blood,
Lead on a wilderness way;
Call them to conquest through fire line and flood,
Challenge thy people today.

—JESSIE BROWN POUNDS

The supreme question of the hour now upon the tongues of tens of thousands of God's children is, "What is the remedy for the unbelief, spiritual powerlessness, and evangelistic inefficiency of the ministry and membership of the church of our dear Lord?" The divine answer to that question will be found in the fifty-ninth chapter of Isaiah. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

—WILLIAM PHILLIPS HALL

O God of all power, who hath called from death the great Pastor of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, comfort and defend the flock which he hath redeemed by the blood of the eternal testament; increase the number of true preachers; mitigate and lighten the hearts of the ignorant; relieve the pains of such as be afflicted, but especially of those that suffer for the testimony of the truth, by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

—JOHN KNOX

Fifth Week—Fourth Day

CONVERSION TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

PENTECOST made it clear that the disciple of Christ must have a new attitude toward sin of every kind; this was the *first step to a regenerated life of stewardship*. Without this genuine repentance all the social provisions of the gospel must fail. It was a great Englishman who, lamenting the death of his friend, said, "I am sorry for ———. I do not think he will like God very well." These words reveal a keen understanding of what it means to "go to heaven": it is to

"like" God and his program. But can one do this without hating all sin and ungodliness? The disciples began their ministry by insisting that the only way to be a good steward is to "repent." Only to such is the promise of the Holy Spirit. "We need not expect any great nation-wide revival," said J. W. Mahood, "until we begin to preach more as our fathers did concerning the sinfulness of the human heart, the need of repentance, and the absolute necessity for the new birth as a condition for entrance into the kingdom of heaven."

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.

—Acts 2:37-39

READ ACTS 2:36-40

I bow my forehead to the dust,
  I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
  A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that 'round me lies,
  I feel the guilt therein;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
  A world confess its sin.

No offering of my own I have,
  Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts he gave,
  And plead his love for love.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

I am one of the fortunate Marines who have recently returned to this country after serving in the offensive against the Japanese on Guadalcanal. . . . We find . . . a condition behind our backs that stuns us. We find that our American citizens, those of Japanese ancestry, are being persecuted, yes, persecuted as though Adolf Hitler himself were in charge. . . . I am putting it mildly when I say it makes our blood boil. . . . We shall fight this injustice, intolerance, and un-Americanism at home! We will not break faith with those who died.

—From a Marine's letter

O God, whom none can love except they hate the thing that is evil, and who willedst by thy Son our Saviour to redeem us from all iniquity: Deliver us when we are tempted to look on sin without abhorrence, and let the virtue of his passion come between us and the enemy of our souls; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—David R. Porter

Fifth Week—Fifth Day

SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS BROADENED

In yesterday's study we saw that not only was the stewardship responsibility deepened as a result of Pentecost but it was also broadened in that there developed *a new social consciousness.* "You speak of a passion for souls, but I do not want anyone to love my soul if he will not love me" was the way Professor Caleb T. Winchester once expressed the impossibility of a ministry that was not concerned with the everyday environment and total life of man. The Holy Spirit kindled a compassion that was big enough to minister to *every human need,* thus creating a new and profound feeling of human brotherhood. Take, for instance, the first record of the Gentiles' being filled with the Holy Spirit, upon the coming of Peter and his

companions to the pious Roman centurion at Caesarea. This is a good example of how these Jewish Christians overlooked many of the things which formerly they had considered essential to godliness. The outpouring of the Spirit upon these "foreigners" was so evident that all else seemed nonessential. When later Peter was called to account for his alleged irregularities he replied in these illuminating words:

As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?

—Acts 11:15-17

READ ACTS 11:1-18

Half the world is on the wrong scent in the pursuit of happiness. They think it consists in having and getting and in being served by others. . . . It consists in giving, and in serving others. He that would be happy, let him remember that there is but one way—it is more blessed, it is more happy, to give than to receive.

—HENRY DRUMMOND

High thoughts, and noble in all lands,
Help me; my soul is fed on such.
But ah! the touch of lips and hands—
The human touch! Warm, vital, close,
life's symbols dear,
These need I most, and now, and here.

—RICHARD BURTON

O Christ, may I so live in wholehearted surrender to thy Spirit that thy mind shall be my mind. I would not throw away easily the attitudes of the fathers. I have no right to regard lightly the traditions that have been sacred to them through generations. But when I

realize how unchristian some traditions and prejudices have been, and how they have blocked the program of thy Kingdom and increased man's inhumanity to man, O Spirit of Truth, I pray thee to help me to keep surrendered to thy mind. Help me to dare to do thy will at any time, in any place; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Fifth Week—Sixth Day

ASSURANCE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST

PENTECOST brought also a new attitude toward property and possessions, an attitude just as revolutionary as the new attitude that abolished racial prejudice.

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.

—Acts 2:44-47

The early church has sometimes been unfairly accused of being "other worldly," but certain it is that in no subsequent age has the church shown a more thoroughgoing disposition to provide for the total welfare of its members. Thus we have the picture of a church where the passion of stewardship was so strong that one member was ready to sell his possessions in order to minister to the common need.

It is becoming more and more evident in our day that we need a Pentecost to do for us what it did for the early church. It is becoming evident that the church will never see a deep spiritual awakening until

men take the Christian attitude toward property and possessions. For the sake of the new world and for the sake of a new church, property and possessions must be dedicated to Christ.

READ ACTS 2:40-47

To reach old age possessed only of money and a desire to increase it, is not success in life. It is a sad and terrible failure; better to die a pauper in purse than a pauper in soul; better fail to get money than to allow money to get you.

—Author unknown

Of all the prizes
That earth can give,
  This is the best:
To find thee, Lord,
A living Presence near,
  And in thee rest!

Friends, fortune, fame,
  Or what might come to me—
I count all loss
If I find not
Companionship
  With thee!

—R. S. C.

O Thou Christ, author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before thee endured the cross, despising the shame, reveal to us this day, we beseech thee, the secret of thy power to suffer and endure; and then grant us thy joy; to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.

Fifth Week—Seventh Day

DIVINE LEADERSHIP

CONSPICUOUS among the results of Pentecost was the assurance the disciples came to possess that they were

more closely than ever associated with their risen Lord in his redemptive program. It was perfectly natural for Peter, referring to Pentecost with all its wonderful accompaniments, to declare that "he [Jesus] hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear."

This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.

—Acts 2:32-33

Thus Pentecost compelled a broader vision of stewardship by bringing in the dispensation of the personal leadership of the Spirit of Jesus. Thus the disciples thought of themselves not as having a commission to win the world to Christ but as *surrendered channels through which Christ might win the world to himself.* Thus Mark says in his Gospel:

And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed.

—Mark 16:20

READ ACTS 3:1-15

All experience comes to be but more and more of pressure of his life on ours. I cannot tell you how personal this grows to me—he is here—and I know him. It is no figure of speech. It is the realest thing in the world, and every day makes it more real, and one wonders with delight what it will grow to as the years go on.

—PHILLIPS BROOKS

I know not how such things can be,
But I do know He speaks with me,
Not from the grass nor from the sod,
But in my heart the Voice of God,

Speaking Spirit unto spirit;
And if I listen, I can hear it—
Voice of God that calls to me
Out of his infinity.

—R. S. C.

O God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst charge thine apostles to preach the gospel to every creature; prosper, we pray thee, all missions of thy church. Send forth laborers into thy vineyard, and bestow upon them all things needful for their work. Grant them wisdom in all difficulties, help in trouble, the sense of thy presence in loneliness, and, if it be thy will, visible success after labor, that thy holy name may be glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

—Guild of St. Paul

QUESTIONS

Introduction.

a) What difference does God's presence make in your life?
b) Why call the gift of the Holy Spirit God's *climactic* act in fulfilling his own stewardship? How does the Holy Spirit give power to Christians?
c) How much does God care whether you make the most of yourself?
d) Why is it my business to build manhood into other men? Is it not enough to look after myself?
e) How does God make stewardship possible?
f) What spiritual reason can you give for material failure of the church?

1. Practical Understanding.
a) How is it possible to have the accumulated material of life usable?
b) What qualities make for successful Christian living—those of faithful stewardship?
c) Does God "work for" any who "waiteth for him"?

d) Whence comes our weakness? Our strength? Our temptations? Our inspirations?

2. Personal Association with God.
   a) What is the highest commendation God ever gives man: by calling him servant, friend, son, etc.?
   b) Are imagination and memory quickened by the presence of the Holy Spirit?

3. The Secret of Success.
   a) Why is a Christian expected to do the impossible? Is this a reasonable expectation?
   b) Are we "free agents," or only soldiers "under orders"?
   c) Why does God need personal representatives on earth?

4. Conversion to Righteousness.
   a) Define sin, repentance, heaven. Can we "like" God and dislike people?
   b) What is the relation between individual sin and social harmony, or heaven?

5. Social Consciousness Broadened.
   a) Why is it that "no nation rises any higher than its religion"?
   b) In what ways do you find Christian love expressing itself?

6. Assurance That Jesus Is the Christ.
   a) How may we know that we are reconciled to God?

7. Divine Leadership.
   a) How does the Holy Spirit lead?
   b) What constitutes a call to religious service? Is it confined to church work?
   c) What are "consecration," "full surrender," "sanctification"? How do they differ from Christian stewardship?

CHAPTER VI

Stewardship and Prayer

PRE-EMINENT among the important results of Pentecost was the new valuation which the disciples placed upon prayer as a stewardship. After these tremendous days which preceded and immediately followed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, prayer became for the disciples not only a privilege but a necessity. Praying was a vital part of their work. Indeed, it was preliminary to every other task. *To wrestle in prayer* was *as much a part of faithful stewardship* as to proclaim the message or to spend money for the welfare of a growing congregation. The poet James Montgomery has said:

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

But Pentecost taught those early disciples that there could be no fire to tremble in the breast, nor could the Kingdom work be accomplished in any sense, unless they were faithful in their ministry of prayer. And it is the same today. The lesson of the early church needs to be learned by each new generation.

A veteran of the ministry was speaking. He had fought many a battle for God, and with him had won some outstanding victories. But there was one source of sorrow. "As I look back over my life," he said, "I regret that I have not spent more time in prayer. I could have accomplished more for the Kingdom." Similar words came from another of America's outstanding ministers: "If I could live my life over again, there is one thing I would have different. I do not feel that I would put any more time into my study, or upon my sermons; I would not give more attention to my pastoral labors, but I would give infinitely more time to prayer. Here is where I have failed." This good man was voicing the confession of many. Out of careful observation Andrew Murray declared: "If the amount of true wrestling with God in the daily life of the average Christian could be disclosed, the wonder might be, not that he accomplishes so little, but that God is willing to use him at all."

It seems evident that the most stupid heresy in the Christian Church has nothing to do with theological controversy. Sadly enough, it has to do with this more vital matter of prayer. In so far as the church of today does not share the conviction of the early church that prayer is the first work, just so far are we in danger. not only of becoming practical atheists, but also of blocking Christ's program for the evangelization of the world.

It is not necessary to *understand* the mysteries involved to believe that prayer is the first requisite in world conquest. Indeed, there are deep questions in

volved, but Jesus did not consider it his business to explain prayer; he commanded it. He instructed his disciples to "tarry at Jerusalem." He told them that authority was given unto him and that he would commit his authority unto them as stewards. Thus prayer was to be the means by which the disciple was to release the resources and energies of God. Prayer, therefore, became not only a privilege but a trust, and it is required in stewards that they be found faithful.

Moreover, Jesus demonstrated *in his daily life* this same need of constant communion with the Father. If Jesus needed to spend whole nights in prayer, how perilous is the failure of the disciples to pray! What does it mean to us that Jesus pointed to the field whitening to the harvest and commanded, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest"? (Matt. 9:38). Is it of minor significance that Jesus pointed out prayer as the first requisite? Behold the whitening fields! How it should drive us to our knees to hear Jesus declare that the great God waits for human intercession before thrusting forth workers into the field. Or consider prayer from another angle—in relation to some difficult problem that the best of human ingenuity and labor fails to work out. What a terrible responsibility he places on our faithfulness at the mercy seat when he declares, "This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer" (Mark 9:29). And what does Paul mean when he writes, "I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, . . . be made"? (I Tim. 2:1). Surely, we should know. One has answered, "When I shall see Christians all over the world resolved to prove what shall be the efficacy of prayer for the conversion of the world, I shall begin to think that the millennium is at the door." Robert E. Speer concludes, "If fifty men of our generation will enter into the Holy Place of prayer and become henceforth men

whose hearts God has touched with the prayer passion, the history of the church will be changed."

What does all this mean if not that Jesus taught, and Pentecost illuminated, his message that *prayer is and always has been the greatest need of the church and of the world?* Dr. Speer adds: "Deeper than the needs of men; deeper far than the need for money; aye, deep down at the bottom of our spiritless life, is the need of the forgotten prevailing world-wide prayer."

If prayer is the great need of the world, why is it so difficult to get men really to pray? This matter has been put into these classic lines by Archbishop Trench:

Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will avail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take!
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong—
That we are sometimes overborne with care—
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled—when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?

The key sentence is "Why therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong, or others?" Many sincere followers of Christ have shed tears over this question. The most obvious answer seems to be that we have not educated ourselves to think of prayer as a stewardship in which it is required that we be faithful to the end. Bishop Hamilton, of Salisbury, has splendidly emphasized this conviction: "No man is likely to do much good at prayer who does not begin by looking upon it in the light of a work to be prepared for and

persevered in with all the earnestness which we bring to bear upon the subjects which are in our opinion most necessary."

The book of Acts furnishes abundant evidence that this was the secret of the successful prayer life of the early Christians. Not only was prayer a blessed communion with their Lord, but it was a necessary part of the work which they were to do in the fulfillment of the great commission.

Sixth Week—First Day

PRAYER IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word.

—Acts 6:2-4

The book of Acts records a number of crises in the development of the Christian Church. Perhaps these were not always apparent to the disciples at the moment, but the student of the Scriptures can clearly recognize their character from the distance. Perhaps the greatest of all these crucial moments was that which crystallized into an immortal statement of the attitude of the leaders toward prayer. The necessity of taking care of the members of a rapidly growing church was threatening the very life of the Kingdom. Numerous matters of administration were developing. Some families must be taken care of. A great peril arose that was all the greater because it was unseen. The leaders of the Church were in danger of being

smothered in the wheels of the machinery, and the Church itself was in danger of starting on the road where the major emphasis is placed upon organization, to the neglect of the spiritual resources. We can well wish that the leaders of the Church in all generations could have seen as clearly as did those early leaders, who took their stand upon *the primacy of the stewardship of prayer.*

READ ACTS 6:1-7

Of far greater service than any array of learning or gifts of eloquence, more to be desired than gold and fine raiment, more to be sought than a great name, or apparent opportunities for large usefulness, of deeper significance than high intellectual attainment, or power of popular influence, is this gift—may God give it to each of us!—of the secret and sweetness of unceasing, prevailing, triumphant prayer for the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

—ROBERT E. SPEER

To stretch my hand and touch him,
Though he be far away;
To raise my eyes and see him
Through darkness as through day;
To lift my voice and call him—
This is to pray!

To feel a hand extended
By One who standeth near;
To view the love that shineth
In eyes serene and clear;
To know that he is calling—
This is to hear!

—SAMUEL W. DUFFIELD

O Lord, my God, what is thy will for me today? What task hast thou for me? What opportunity hast thou placed in my way? Open mine eyes that I may

discover thy will! Save me from wasting the new day! May I turn it into eternal profit! Amen.

—J. H. Jowett

Sixth Week—Second Day

GOD'S RESPONSE TO PRAYER

The four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

—Revelation 5:8

Today's scripture gives a remarkably vivid, though figurative, portrayal of Heaven's response to the faithful stewardship of prayer on earth. The petitions of earth are pictured as sacredly preserved in the form of incense in the prayer vials of heaven. Moreover, the "incense" of the prayers of the heavenly inhabitants is also added. When the "vials" become filled they are poured out before the throne of God with the result that fire is cast upon the earth as the signal of answered prayer.

And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

—Revelation 8:4-5

These passages in Revelation are worthy of prolonged study. John Alfred Faulkner, of Drew Seminary, has preserved for us a private memorandum made by a missionary pastor on whom this picture of the prayer vials in heaven had made a wonderful impression. The following is one of the paragraphs:

I became pastor of a church, and started to get something in the prayer vials. It was a broken-down church, for it had never been broken-up. There were ten godly women, but they were reviled, and the church was a by-word. We gave one evening a week to nothing but prayer, and no limit as to time. God saw the measure which he required, and when the vials of prayer were full he poured them out. We did not have altar services because the whole place was an altar. The whole community was turned upside down, which meant right side up, and I had the joy of receiving many into the assembly. Those tall, strong men were gloriously transformed by the same graces, by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

READ REVELATION 8:1-5

One day in Portuguese West Africa in 1914 I was standing by the river and remembering those near and dear to me back home. It became an agony to me. "Lord Jesus, does distance make any difference in the measuring of thy promise?" I took off my helmet and looked across the Atlantic and said to the mountains which blocked the minds of my loved ones from Christ, "Be thou removed and cast into the depths of the sea," and prayed in the name of Jesus that he would send his convincing Word in power into the hearts of my beloved brothers and sisters. Some weeks later I got a wonderful letter from my eldest brother, a keen business man, telling me that he and his wife and children had been brought to Jesus. Today he is an earnest Christian man influencing many for good. A few weeks later I received letters from two other brothers telling how they and their wives and children had knelt together at the altar and given themselves to Christ. Then I received news that my next younger brother had begun preaching the gospel, and found him a strong, earnest, spiritual preacher, winning souls.

—From a missionary's memorandum
Reported by JOHN ALFRED FAULKNER

Stir me, oh! stir me, Lord, I care not how,
But stir my heart in passion for the world!
Stir me to give, to go—but most to pray:

Stir, till the blood-red banner be unfurled
O'er lands that still in deepest darkness lie,
O'er deserts where no cross is lifted high.
—Author unknown

Blessed Christ, thou who didst promise that thy disciples might remove mountains, increase our faith; hold us by thy mighty hand until doubts shall cease, and we believe. Teach us to tarry in thy presence until, conquered by thy Spirit, we too go forth to triumph in thy holy name. Amen.

Sixth Week—Third Day

REGULAR STEWARDSHIP OF PRAYER

Lyman Abbott once said, "It is the minister's business to keep his people up to concert pitch." Indeed, here is indicated an obligation not only upon the minister but upon every Christian steward to keep fit to conduct his Master's business. And only regular communion with God can ensure this preparedness. Herein is one of the reasons why Jesus taught prayer as a stewardship, not to be engaged in as a summer pastime, or with occasional spasms of desire, but as a continuous desperate measure necessary both to the spiritual health of the disciple and to his usefulness.

The psalmist said, "The Lord is my refuge"; but he added "and my strength." The early Christians appreciated the comfort of a communion and could have sung with us of today:

There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads;
A place than all beside more sweet:
It is the blood-bought mercy-seat.

But a study of the New Testament indicates that in the center of their communion was always to be found

the passion of the Great Commission. Note in the scripture that follows how these disciples who had been persecuted by the high Jewish court and then released with threatenings, are praying not for personal protection or heavenly raptures but to be equipped with new boldness, in order *faithfully to serve as witnesses* in the face of the growing opposition.

And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord. . . . And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus.

—Acts 4:23, 29-30

READ ACTS 4:13-22

If thou, then, wouldst have thy soul surcharged with the fire of God, so that those who come nigh to thee shall feel some mysterious influence proceeding from thee, thou must draw nigh to the source of that fire, to the throne of God and of the Lamb, and shut thyself out from the world—that cold world which so swiftly steals our fire away. Enter into thy closet and shut thy door, and there, isolated "before the throne," await the baptism; then the fire shall fill thee, and when thou comest forth, holy power will attend thee, and thou shalt labor not in thine own strength, but "with demonstration of the Spirit and with power."

— WILLIAM ARTHUR

I can but testify;
  Words may not tell
This dear companionship
  I know so well;

Ears may be deaf,
  Eyes may not see

This Presence who comes near
And speaks with me;

But realer than this world
With all its grace,
Grows the Invisible
And the Unseen Face!

—R. S. C.

O blessed Christ, have right of way in me this day. Help me to grow by the way of surrender. Let me lose my life that I may find it—in thee. Give me power over the world, the flesh, and over all the devils of word or thought or deed. Grant me thy strength; and when the night shall come, may I lie down in peace with thee. Amen.

Sixth Week—Fourth Day

UNLOCKING THE DOORS

And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread.

—Luke 11:1-3

The stewardship of prayer suggests a holy habit to be used in daily devotion, not a spasm of worship for times of special need. The Lord's Prayer seems to emphasize the need of daily intercession and communion. When Jesus teaches us to pray "Give us this day our daily bread," he seems to emphasize our need of every day; and the daily bread he mentions is not merely material bread, although we may reasonably include that. But we must remember that in another

place he quotes the Old Testament word "Man doth not live by bread only" (Deut. 8:3). The spirit within us is just as hungry for daily food from the Creator as our bodies are for meat and drink. He who feeds the needs of his body irregularly will sooner or later lose his health. Just so, the spiritual needs of man demand regular prayer and worship. So the poet wrote:

Break thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee,
O living Word!

—Mary A. Lathbury

There are few things on earth more sublime than Christian motherhood, but how dependent on prayer is the stewardship of motherhood! A mother with a large family in a small house was in the habit of declaring that she would "give up" if it were not for the bolt on the inside of the attic storeroom door. She herself had bought that bolt and put it on—unknown to anyone. In among the scrap bags hanging from the rafters, and the piles of trunks and boxes, that one soul, pressing its way heavenward, found its Bethel. Out from that attic room the mother would come, wisting not that her face shone, with a new hope in her heart and a fresh courage for living and loving, sacrificing and serving.

Read Luke 11:1-13

It has pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, the benefit of which I have not lost, for more than fourteen years. The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever that the first

great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord, or how I might glorify the Lord, but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world, and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.

—GEORGE MÜLLER

I know a peace
Where there is no peace,
A calm where the wild winds blow,
A secret place
Where face to face
With the Master I may go.

When tempests toss
And all seems loss,
And no other help I know,
There is this place
Where face to face
With the Master I may go.

And I find me strong,
Though the days be long,
And sorry the winds may blow,
When I seek the face
In that secret place
Of the Master whom I know.

—R. S. C.

Have mercy upon us, O God, according to thy tender mercies; forgive us that so often in our selfishness we forget thee and the King's business. The cares of the day press heavily upon us, and we crowd thee out. Forgive us, Lord, and wilt thou give us grace to try again? Amen.

Sixth Week—Fifth Day

RELEASING PERSONAL POWER

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

—Matthew 9:36-38

Why should God wait for the prayers of his disciples before sending workers into his long-waiting fields? Jesus seems to teach that the Supreme Person of the Kingdom, having appointed man as his responsible agent, will not go over his steward's head in working out the moral and spiritual salvation of the world. In his great wisdom he has seen that the surest way to build up man "in his own image" is to make the release of his divine powers largely subject to the intercession of his fellow workers. A parallel may be found in the stewardship of money. There can be no doubt that gold is a great factor in the saving of the world. But God has said, "The gold and silver is mine." Then why does he not miraculously turn mountains into money in the face of terrible needs?

The answer is perfectly clear: He has placed all his resources in the hands of his human stewards, and only as these are faithful can God release his own for the building of his Kingdom. Is it difficult, therefore, to think that his spiritual resources are subject to the same general law? The Holy Spirit seems to be limited in his operation according as men are faithful or unfaithful in their stewardship of prayer. Is not this the reason that Jesus showed less concern about teaching men how to preach than teaching them how to

pray? "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest."

READ LUKE 10:1-2

It is worth while making any efforts, however desperate, to learn to pray. . . . Often when I desire to see the Truth come home to any man, I say to myself, "If I have him here, he will spend half an hour with me. Instead, I will spend that half hour in prayer for him."

—FORBES ROBINSON

The weary ones had rest, the sad had joy that day,
They wondered how!
A plowman, singing at his work, had prayed
"God help them now."

Away in foreign lands they wondered how
Their simple words had power;
At home, the Christians, two or three,
Had met to pray an hour.

Yes, we are always wondering, wondering how:
Because we do not see
Someone, unknown perhaps, and far away,
On bended knee.

—Author unknown

Almighty God, who hast chosen us to share with thee in the distribution of thy bounties, grant us power for our tasks this day, for without thy Spirit we must betray thy trust. Most Holy God, keep us, we pray thee, faithful in our stewardship this day; and, forgiving us our sins, strengthen our purpose to transact all our business solely to thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sixth Week—Sixth Day

PRAYER A DUTY

PRAYER as the acknowledgment of the human stewardship of God's spiritual resources is emphasized in the Old Testament as well as in the New. All the prophets were evidently given some realization that they were mediators of divine blessings between the people and the Almighty. The great statesman Samuel is a conspicuous example of one who felt the obligation of prayer. In that critical hour in the history of the Israelitish kingdom, when by the choice of the people themselves he has been retired as their leader in favor of the new King Saul, Samuel remains faithful to the nation and his people, declaring, "Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (I Sam. 12:23).

The scripture for today gives another outstanding illustration of the stewardship of prayer. In describing this scene, William E. Doughty says:

> A fierce battle was at its crisis. Far-reaching issues hung on the way the battle went. Intercession was the pivot on which the victory turned. Joshua was leading the battle on the plain; Moses and Aaron and Hur, the intercessors, were in the thick of the battle on the hill alone with God. While intercession continued, victory was assured. When it ceased, the tide turned to defeat. Given a Joshua to lead the battle, a Moses and his helpers in intercession, and no Amalek can prevail. If in our day the church would realize the significance of that scene on the hill as the decisive factor in the conflict on the plain, the shout of victory would reverberate everywhere among the hosts of God.

Why, at the end of this scripture, does Jehovah say, "Write this for a memorial in a book"?

And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book.

—Exodus 17:11-14

READ I SAMUEL 12:20-25

Is intercession with a travail, or is it a playtime, a recreation, the least exacting of all things, an exercise in which there is neither labor nor blood? "The blood is the life." Bloodless intercession is dead. It is only the man whose prayer is a vital expenditure, a sacrifice which holds fellowship with Calvary, who "fills up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ."

—J. H. JOWETT

More than half beaten, but fearless,
Facing the storm and the night;
Breathless and reeling, but tearless,
Here in the lull of the fight.
I who bow not but before thee,
God of the fighting clan,
Lifting my fists I implore thee,
Give me the heart of a man!

—Author unknown

O God, the might of them that put their trust in thee, grant that we may be more than conquerors over all that make war upon our souls, and in the end may enter into perfect peace in thy presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—ROMAN BREVIARY

Sixth Week—Seventh Day

DEPENDING ON GOD

"I HAVE come to see through the eyes of God," said Donald Hankey just before he died. So had Bishop James W. Bashford, of China, when faced with the humanly impossible tasks in that great mission field. In describing the emergency to a fellow worker, he said: "I made up my mind that I could not depend on my friends in America, that *I must depend on God alone*. Therefore, I must live closer to God than I had ever done before. I must get into the very heart of God."

The final value of the scriptural teaching of the stewardship of prayer lies in its emphasis on man's ultimate dependence on God as the source and creator of the divine resources of the Kingdom. No one really learns this without coming to realize that prayer must be the first business of his life. So it was with Paul. This is the explanation of the old veteran's exhortation to young Timothy:

I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivngs, be made for all men.

—I Timothy 2:1

With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

—Ephesians 6:18

But the supreme illustration of one who saw "through the eyes of God" and put prayer as the *first work of faithful stewardship* was our Lord himself. Of this example Robert E. Speer says: "There are two things which make our Lord's example in the life of prayer of special significance. In the first place, if ever

anyone could have dispensed with prayer, it was he. In the second place, his experience tried out the whole reality of prayer. Whatever he found in it, we may be sure is there."

And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed."

—Mark 1:35

READ MATTHEW 14:22-23

Allow no rush of work or of pleasure to crowd out time for prayer. Luther once said, "I have much work to do today, so I will arise an hour earlier in order to have time for quiet prayer." Those who make a rule of the Morning Watch should resolve never to allow a single exception. When away on vacation, or sleeping in the same room with others, on camping parties when we sleep under the stars, or out in the thick of life's work, cling unshakably to the regular observance of this life-giving habit.

—DAVID R. PORTER

Lo! amid the press,
The whirl and hum and pressure of my day,
I hear thy garments sweep, thy seamless dress,
And close beside my work and weariness
Discern thy gracious form, not far away,
But very near, O Lord, to help and bless.

The busy fingers fly, the eyes may see
Only the glancing needle which they hold,
But all my life is blossoming inwardly,
And every breath is like a litany;
While through each labor, like a thread of gold,
Is woven the sweet consciousness of thee!

—SUSAN COOLIDGE

O God our Father, who dost exhort us to pray, and who dost grant what we ask, if only, when we ask, we

live a better life; hear me, who am trembling in this darkness, and stretch forth thy hand unto me; hold forth thy light before me; recall me from my wanderings; and, thou being my guide, may I be restored to myself and to thee, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—St. Augustine

QUESTIONS

Introduction.

a) What is prayer that its use becomes so imperative?
b) Is the one who does not pray godless?
c) What was the power for which the disciples were pressed to "tarry at Jerusalem"?
d) Why should God wait for men to pray before sending workers?
e) Do you believe the statements by Robert E. Speer concerning the efficacy of prayer? Why?

1. Prayer in the Primitive Church.
   a) What is the relative importance of organization and of prayer in your own church?
   b) Were the Grecians wrong in calling attention to abuses in the church? Is it wrong now to question the conduct of the church?

2. God's Response to Prayer.
   a) May we expect a certain amount of power or virtue for a given amount of praying?
   b) What do we mean by "filling the vials of prayer"?

3. Regular Stewardship of Prayer.
   a) Is prayer a happy privilege, or a desperate remedy for "lost causes"?
   b) Who comes first in your care—you, or others, or God?

4. Unlocking the Doors.
   a) Is prayer a duty? A service? A condition? An attitude? A conferring? A monologue? A dialogue? Worship? Magic? Ritual? An offering? A safeguard? A "pull"?

5. Releasing Personal Power.
   a) What differences have you noticed between those who pray and those who do not?
   b) If men believe that prayer releases divine resources, why do they not pray?
   c) In what ways are God's administration of spiritual and material powers similar?
   d) Discuss the following question asked by a layman of his pastor: "Some people do a lot of praying but little else, and some of us do a lot of work and not much praying—which do you prefer?"

6. Prayer a Duty.
   a) Why is it a sin not to pray?
   b) What relation is there between prayer and morale? Prayer and courage? And confidence? And fidelity?
   c) What is intercessory prayer? Is it necessary?

7. Depending on God.
   a) Are the prizes obtainable through merely human help worthy a man's life?
   b) Which is more important to us, what Jesus said, or what he did?

Chapter VII

The Peril to Stewardship

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.

John Wesley never showed more keenly his powers of discernment than when he said, "Christianity has in it the elements of its own destruction." Of course the statement needs explanation, and Wesley proceeds to explain: "When a man becomes a true Christian, he becomes industrious, trustworthy, and prosperous. Now, if that man, whilst he gets all he can and saves all he can, does not give all he can, I have more hope of Judas Iscariot than of that man!"

The burden of this message from an old sermon is evidently this: Godliness brings prosperity; prosperity creates property; but property brings the peril of a divided heart. Therefore, blessed is the man who keeps property in its proper place, even as God said at the beginning, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Thus the present chapter is an appeal to the Church to uproot the prevalent sin of covetousness, a sin that is the more devastating because it stalks abroad in the guise of respectability, not only blocking the progress of the Kingdom but deceiving the very elect. Pity the man whose money, intended to be his servant, actually becomes his master; who does not see property as a stewardship, not to be lavished on self, but to be used for the saving of the community and of the world—in the name of the Father. Property can bless to heaven or tempt to hell.

Among the growing clouds of witnesses to this truth is Roger W. Babson, who goes farther than Wesley, suggesting how nations as well as individuals are blighted by the lust for wealth. Says Mr. Babson:

Just before I went to Brazil I was the guest of the President of the Argentine Republic. After lunching one day we sat in his sun parlor looking out over the river. He was very thoughtful. He said, "Mr. Babson, I have been wondering why it is that South America, with all its great natural advantages, is so far behind North America, notwithstanding that South America was settled before North America." Then he went on to tell how the forests of South America had two hundred and eighty-six trees that can be found in no book of botany. He told me about many ranches that had thousands of acres under cultivation in one block. He mentioned the mines of iron, coal, copper, silver, and gold, and all those great rivers and water powers which rival Niagara. "Why is it, with all these natural resources, that we are so far behind North America?" Well, those of you who have been there know the reason, but, being a guest, I said, "Mr. President, what do you think is

the reason?" He replied, "I have come to this conclusion: South America was settled by the Spanish, who came to South America in search of gold; but North America was settled by the Pilgrim Fathers, who went there in search of God!"

The author of the above story significantly adds, "Let us American citizens never kick down the ladder by which we climbed up." It is characteristic of the insidious sin of covetousness that it leads to this very thing.

When Gilbert Chesterton said, "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting—it has been found difficult and not tried," he might have been writing an introduction to a tract on the Christianizing of property, for without question the greatest hindrance to Christian conquest at this hour is the unconsecrated money in the hands of members of the Christian Church. Here is terrible evidence of the widespread grip which the sin of covetousness has got upon professing Christians. And there can be no doubt that this is so, and that it is so in direct disobedience to the teachings of the New Testament.

Take just one of the statements of Jesus: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth." Since the days of the early Church what generation of Christians has taken these words seriously? The devil of covetousness has helped us either to dodge them altogether or explain away their meaning. Certainly we have not tried them and found them wanting. Instead, they have been found difficult and not tried. Meanwhile Christ has been wounded in the house of his friends, and his disciples have degenerated in the midst of the luxuries and pleasures that unconsecrated wealth affords. Hear John Wesley again on this point. His language may be vigorous, but no one will question his earnest purpose to save his people from loving money more than God. He says: "Some of you Methodists

are twice as rich as you were before you were Methodists; some of you are fourfold as rich; some of you are tenfold as rich; now if, whilst you get all you can and save all you can, you do not give all you can, then you are tenfold more the child of hell than you were before!"

But what additional evidence is there that the love of money is indeed perilous? Call the witnesses. In the first place, there is the testimony of the Old and New Testaments. Then, as already indicated, there is witness from the experience of men and nations. Some of them are recorded in the daily readings, but for the present consider this typical case of George Innes, a modern business man who in *The Confessions of a Business Man* tells the story of "Why I stopped getting rich for riches' sake."

My first shock occurred when one day an old man came into my office. He was a Scotchman whom I had known from my boyhood. He came to America a poor boy; both he and his parents had struggled with poverty, and he had inherited the spirit of frugality and thrift. My earliest recollection of him was as a young man filled with ambition, strength, and capacity for enormous endeavor, fun-loving and kind. I now saw an old man, broken and shattered; *the open, generous expression had gone from his face, and another force was host to the citadel of his soul.* He had become very rich, but had neglected other graces. His children had wandered away into different ways, none of them honoring to the father. He told me his story; his life was bitter, and the end was unsatisfactory. Indeed, he said that if he were back again in Scotland among the heather hills, free to choose the course of life again, he would gladly give up all the wealth his life had been dedicated to secure. Tears dropped from his eyes as he told me this, and I imagine that tears had for a long time been a stranger to his hard face. It made me think, What was the difference between the course I was taking and the one which he, at my age had pursued?

Like the prodigal son, the younger business man—warned by this living example of a shriveled soul—came to himself. Out of his struggle with his passion for riches and for worldly success, he says in the same pamphlet:

There is a sin in the church that we are afraid to mention. What is its common name? I will tell you what its common name is, and what its aristocratic name is, and what its historical name is, and what its scriptural name is. It is *covetousness!* "Oh, well," you say, "that is not so bad. That is a pretty white sort of sin, in fact, almost a virtue, for it is just saving, isn't it? Being thrifty, being shrewd, that is what covetousness is, isn't it? In that case, even if Paul and Isaiah and Jeremiah and some others speak of it as a sin, it cannot be so bad." Well, let us see what Paul says about it, what his idea of the thing is. Hear what he says:

"For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." —Eph. 5:5

Now that is awful. Surely Paul had gotten excited in speaking to the Ephesians. Surely he did not mean that a man who simply hangs onto this world's goods should be classified in such frightful company as fornicators and idolators. It must be that he was excited that day. Let us see what he said to the Colossians when he spoke to them:

"Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." —Col. 3:5

That is just about as bad as the other. Surely Paul does not mean to speak thus about a man who gets a good big pile of money, and then is kind enough to go to church and respectable enough always to put a nice, crisp bill on the plate, which is as much as he has given during the week tipping porters on the train and in restaurants. Surely, Paul does not mean that a man who is as good to God as he is to the waiter could be guilty of a sin classed with idolatry and uncleanness. Let us see what he says somewhere else. In Romans, for example:

"Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents." —Rom. 1:29-30

Here we are in this day of our Lord with a sin within our church that is condemned more violently in the Scripture than any other sin. Search the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find the idolatry of Astoreth or Baal denounced in as lurid language as is this sin of covetousness. . . . This is the sin that made Achan a thief, that made Gehazi a leper white as snow, that made Ananias a liar, and that made Judas betray Christ. This is the kind of sin we are not saying much about. . . . Come, men of the Kingdom, let us talk about this thing! Let us dig out its cancerous roots! Let us meet it squarely; let us turn the world's finger of scorn from the church that shelters our wives and our little children.

It is impossible to find any comprehensive definition of "covetousness." Definitions can help, but cannot go to the root of the peril. To say that covetousness is "inordinate desire," or that a covetous person is "avaricious," "greedy," or "mercenary" is hardly to define adequately. All of these definitions must be further explained. For our purposes it may be enough to declare that *covetousness is the arch enemy of Jesus' philosophy of stewardship.* It makes self the center and circumference of the universe; it is the negation of everything that stewardship stands for. It creates a selfish, cruel world without a God and without a heaven.

Seventh Week—First Day

WHO ARE COVETOUS?

Let it not be supposed that covetousness is a sin that grips the rich man alone. "It has worked as a gangrene

into the whole fabric of Christian society," says George Innis. "There are plenty of people that do not have capacity to earn more than fifteen dollars a week, the citadel of whose life is clenched as tightly in the grip of covetousness as that of the millionaire." *Indeed, the ubiquitousness of this sin explains why covetousness is a peril not only to the individual but to nations.* At the close of the first World War a high government official declared, "We would have had a veritable riot of greed had it not been for the restrictions imposed upon 'business' by the national government." This statement is not exaggerated, and demonstrates how nations may be at the mercy of a prevalent sin. A nation can make progress only as it learns the stewardship principle that "to have is to owe."

For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

—Jeremiah 6:13-14

And there will be no "peace" until popular opinion recognizes the menace of unchristian property and business—which of course begins in the heart of the individual man. We have not yet seen the hideousness of the sin of seeking to enlarge ourselves while our soldier boys are giving their lives to "make the world safe" for democracy and the four freedoms. Admiral Beatty's words about the first World War were even more true of the second. "If half of the zeal and passion, half of the outpouring of life and treasure, of organization and efficiency that the State has put into this war could be thrown into the cause of the Kingdom and the eternal verities, the world would soon be won for Christ." Certainly present world conditions suggest that a modern nation can be menaced

by the same peril which the Prophet Jeremiah declared was facing Israel.

READ JEREMIAH 6:11-22

While we were at war we laid by in perfectly good savings at a good per cent of interest one billion dollars a month in liberty bonds. . . . But it is worth while to remind ourselves that all our war charities—Red Cross, war work drive, Salvation Army, war chests, etc.—probably fell short of $700,000,000. That is to say, they did not equal in amount the interest of a single year on our liberty bonds. . . . John Ruskin raised the question whether wealth might not better be called "illth," as tending to our ill-being rather than our well-being; and certain it is that every great civilization which has perished, perished after a period of great prosperity.

—EDWIN M. POTEAT

I did not know till on a grave
I saw the wind-blown grasses wave,
How futile and how fugitive
The baubles are for which we strive.

I did not know until above
God called the idol of my love,
Beyond the reach of yearning eyes,
How beautiful is Paradise.

—SUSIE M. BEST

O Lord, renew our spirits, and draw our hearts unto thyself, that our work may not be to us a burden but a delight; and give us such a mighty love to thee as may sweeten all our obedience. Oh, let us not serve thee with the spirit of bondage as slaves, but with the cheerfulness and gladness of children, delighting ourselves in thee and rejoicing in thy work. Amen.

—BENJAMIN JENKS

Seventh Week—Second Day

COVETOUSNESS MISLEADING

THE damning characteristic of covetousness lies in *what it leads to.* It lures men on. The commandment "Thou shalt not covet" is God's warning against the very beginnings of sin. "Is a stingy man a covetous man?" "Is stinginess wickedness?" The surprise with which these questions are so often asked clearly indicates the stealthiness with which this sin creeps up on the unsuspecting, and, with sweet deceit, fixes his affections on *things* rather than life. There is apparently little harm in the request of the man in today's scripture, but Jesus sees the snake of covetousness lifting its poisonous head, and he cries, "Beware!"

And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

—Luke 12:13-15

READ LUKE 12:13-21

I have had many people resort to me for confession. The confession of every sin that I have known or heard of, and of sins so foul that I never dreamed of them, has been poured into my ear. But no person has ever confessed to me the sin of covetousness.

—FRANCIS XAVIER

I looked upon a sea,
  And lo! 'twas dead,
Although by Hermon's snows
  And Jordan fed.

How came a fate so dire?
The tale's soon told.
All that it got it kept,
And fast did hold.

All tributary streams
Found here their grave,
Because that sea received
But never gave.

O sea that's dead! Teach me
To know and feel
That selfish grasp and greed
My doom will seal.

And help me, Lord, my best—
Myself to give,
That I may others bless
And like thee live.

—Author unknown

Not only my heart, Lord, but my mind—so sanctify my mind by the enlightening power of thy Holy Spirit that, being able to detect the very beginnings of sin, however pleasant or alluring, I may be cleansed from all covetousness, whether of the world or the flesh or the devil, and, seeking only and always thy glory, be found at last among the victorious in thy Kingdom. Amen.

Seventh Week—Third Day

VICES THAT FOLLOW COVETOUSNESS

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep

back part of the price of the land? While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

—Acts 5:1-4

The tragedy of Ananias and Sapphira is one of God's most striking warnings concerning the sin of covetousness. "If God should deal as drastically with the church members today who covet prominence but hold on to their money, what percentage of the church members would be carried out dead?" This question was addressed to a certain minister, who found it convenient to answer, "Such questions should be left to the Great Judge."

Probably that was a fair answer, even if evasive, but this does not make void the terrible warning of today's scripture that covetousness brings certain judgment. Moreover, the curse does not go singlehanded. The lust for prominence quite frequently accompanies the lust for money. Covetousness has this one thing in common with stewardship: it cultivates an ambitious spirit. But there is a world of difference in the motive and the result. Someone, comparing Napoleon and Phillips Brooks, said, "The one sought the world for himself, the other sought the world for Christ." In the end all covetous desires must result in soul-tragedy. George Clarke Peck was right when he said that "the best way to get ahead is to get ahead of yourself." Any other kind of "getting ahead" must surely fail. This is the lesson that Ananias and Sapphira did not learn, the lesson which covetousness never teaches.

READ ACTS 5:1-12

The most sensitive spot in the surrender of the whole life to God is property. Perhaps it is because my property

provides me with material comforts, selfish satisfactions, and gratifies personal tastes and appetites. It may be that my property represents so much of myself; so much of my toil, so much of my effort; so much of my time, so much of my strength; that it is my very self. . . . The question is, "Who is owner—God or myself?" If God, then I must surrender all to him. Sometimes the conflict is severe and long. Always man has attempted to except his property from surrender; but when I begin to condition my surrender, then I begin to compromise; and to compromise with God is fatal to my soul.

—Bishop Theodore S. Henderson

Wealth is a means, and life the end;
You lose your hoard, have what you spend.
Oh that unhappy mortal clay
Who never learned to give away!
His heaped-up wealth made him its slave;
He did not use, who never gave.

—Saadi

Oh joy supreme! I know the voice—
Like none beside on earth or sea;
Yea, more, oh soul of mine, rejoice,
By all that he requires of me
I know what God himself must be.

—John Greenleaf Whittier

O Lord, come quickly and reign on thy throne, for now oftentimes something rises up within me and tries to take possession of thy throne; Pride, Covetousness, Uncleanness, and Sloth want to be my kings; then Evil-speaking, Anger, Hatred, and the whole train of voices join with me in working against myself and trying to reign over me. I resist them, I cry out against them, and say, "I have no other King than Christ!" O King of Peace, come and reign in me, for I will have no other king but thee! Amen.

St. Bernard

Seventh Week—Fourth Day

PURPOSE AFFECTED BY COVETOUSNESS

ANOTHER peril grows out of the fact that *covetousness silences the instinctive question of the good steward—"What am I here for?"* The question that covetousness asks is not "What am I here to *give?*" but "What am I here to *get?*" "My Father's business" becomes an afterthought—if remembered at all.

And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? . . . And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

—Mark 10:17, 21-22

A pastor in an Eastern city one day went to a wealthy lady in his congregation to urge her to furnish the hundred and twenty-five dollars needed for some local charity in which the church was interested. The lady was noted more for her wealth than for her generosity. She demurred. Finally the pastor said, "Well, you pray over the matter this week, and if on Sunday you still feel that you should not give this money, just tell me so, and I will say nothing more to you about it." On the next Sabbath the pastor opened his eyes after the benediction to see his parishioner rushing frantically toward the altar with a roll of bills in her outstretched hand. "Here!" she cried, as she thrust the money into his hand, "take your money. I have not been able to enjoy my prayers all this week!"

Of course it was not the minister who spoiled her prayers. She was simply experiencing the struggle that her money-drugged soul was making in trying once more to save its possessor from the deadening grip of covetousness. The same thing is seen in today's story of the rich young ruler who went away sorrowful. Our scripture says, "He went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions." As a matter of fact, *his great possessions had him!*

READ MARK 10:17-27

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheeks of tan!
. . . . . .
From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy!
. . . . . .
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye,—
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

We begin to operate with vital forces when we cross the border into the land of sacrifice. Christ does not begin his reckoning, we do not come within the range of the heavenly standards, until all superfluities have been peeled and stripped away. The things that we can spare carry no blood. The things that we can ill spare carry parts of ourselves, and are alive. He that spared not his own Son, the one that he could not spare, gave himself with the gift, and in the wealth of the sacrifice our redemption was born.

—J. H. JOWETT

O Lord, how I love thy word! Surely it is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to possess the riches of the world for a season! Hold me steadily

in thy presence; let not the vain ambitions of this life enthrall me, nor the covetous desires of the flesh possess me; grant me thy peace; be thou my strength; let me know thy joy, that, always master of the world, I may never be mastered by it. Through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

Seventh Week—Fifth Day

THE DAY OF RECKONING

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

—Luke 12:19-21

Unrestrained desire for the riches of this earth leads to the death of all stewardship consciousness. This is because covetousness *ignores God's claim to ownership, refuses to consider his call to service,* and *blindly closes its eyes to the inevitable day of reckoning.* When one seeks to analyze the sin of stinginess he finds it is fundamentally the appropriating for self that which belongs to God and was intended by the heavenly Father for the use of all his children. One of the early church fathers summarizes this truth in these words: "Understand then, ye rich, that ye are in duty bound to do service, having received more than ye yourselves need."

READ LUKE 12:15-21

There is a tombstone in Florence, Italy, which reads: "Here lies Estrella, who has gone to Heaven to enjoy a fortune of fifty thousand florins which she sent ahead of her

in good deeds." Ah, there is joy in stewardship. . . . Our methods of making and spending money in this life will be either our torment or our bliss in the eternal world so near ahead.

—R. H. BENNETT

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

—WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

O Lord Jesus, who for our sakes didst become poor, we pray thee to protect them that are rich in this world, that they may not be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in thee, the living God, who givest us richly all things to enjoy. Grant them grace so to use their wealth that they may do good, and be rich in good works, ready to distribute, and willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—SURSUM CORDA

Seventh Week—Sixth Day

DISTORTED VISION

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of Jehovah until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, . . . Oh, Lord, what shall I say, after

that Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies! . . . And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Get thee up; . . . Israel hath sinned; yea, they have even transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: yea, they have even taken of the devoted thing, and have also stolen.
—Joshua 7:6-8, 10

It should be observed that the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," *has a unique relation to all the other commandments.* If Achan had learned to check his evil desires upon their first appearance, he would not have stolen the "devoted" thing and thus brought a curse upon himself and all the people of Israel. All thought of the stewardship entrusted to him and to his people vanishes as he entertains his lust for gold. But sin will out, and the result is the defeat of the army of Israel as they move forward from Jericho to the conquest of the next enemy stronghold.

Is there not a striking parallel between the position of Joshua and the Israelites as they humble themselves in the dust after their defeat, and the situation of the modern Church as it stumbles or weakly advances in the face of the open doors of today in all the world? Are present-day Christians using for themselves the "devoted" things which God has commanded should be used for the Kingdom?

READ JOSHUA 7:6-26

Soon after Pearl Harbor, Japanese bombers sank two of the largest of British battleships in the harbor of Singapore. A missionary commented: "In those eleven minutes more wealth went to the bottom of the Indian Ocean than had been spent in two hundred years by the Protestant churches of America in trying to Christianize the people of Japan." The lesson is evident. It looks as if the church members of America might have prevented the World Wars if they had

obeyed the Great Commission. Anyway, General Sir Archibald Wavell said in 1942: "Think what a world we could make if we put into our peace endeavors the same self-sacrifice, the same energy, and the same co-operation that we use in the wastefulness of war."

In vain we call old notions fudge,
And bend our conscience to our dealing;
The Ten Commandments will not budge,
And stealing will continue stealing.

—James Russell Lowell

O Lord, grant us never to parley with temptation, never to tamper with conscience; never to spare the right eye, or hand, or foot, that is a snare to us; never to lose our souls, though in exchange we should gain the whole world. Amen.

—Christina G. Rossetti

Seventh Week—Seventh Day

SAVING RICH MEN

Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? see thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

—Matthew 27:3-5

That is forever the indictment of repentant covetousness—"I have betrayed innocent blood." And unrepentant covetousness always answers, "What is that to us?" There is little honor among thieves. Without a stewardship consciousness there is no concern for God or man. And this is the tragedy of life. Here then, in this scripture, is the supreme example of covetousness

as the master peril of the stewardship life. The young ruler went away sorrowful, but Judas went away and hanged himself.

At the beginning Judas evidently had responded to Jesus' call to the adventurous life of stewardship, but it seems that Judas never quite accepted Jesus' statement "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Accordingly, he never quite gave up mammon. He itched for money and "things," and in the end his desire for fellowship with Christ grew dim. The ingenious explanation of the betrayal which some scholars have suggested is that Judas never expected that Jesus would allow himself to be arrested; he would use his miraculous powers against his enemies. The arrest in the Garden awakened him to the enormity of his sin. No wonder that Jesus repeatedly warned his followers "Beware of covetousness!"

> Oh the little more, and how much it is,
> And the little less, and what worlds away!

READ MATTHEW 19:23-26

Money is danger. We pass by too easily the searching warning words of Jesus. Nothing can fool men like money. It seems so powerful that it makes men forget the Supreme Power. It feeds pride until a man thinks he has no need of God. It constantly invites selfishness. It commands so many things that men forget the real goods which it can never purchase; righteousness, love and a clear conscience. There is only one way of escape; an evil master, it can be a splendid workman; the minister of hell may become the servant of light. All power is danger except as we link it to some high goal.

—ROGER W. BABSON

> He took a towel;
> My Lord Christ took a towel!
> To shame them from their sordid strife,

To lift them to a larger life,
He took a towel in his hand,
With hope that they might understand
Their sin—the greater need
Of all disciples
Blind with greed!

Blind with their selfishness,
How could they see
The Cross, and all
That goes with Calvary?

—R. S. C.

O Lord, turn thy light this morning upon any unconsecrated corner of my heart. Help me to know myself. Search thou the secret places of my mind; discover to me the hidden idols; help me to tear them down. O Thou blessed Redeemer, break down every idol throne; reign supreme and reign alone. Amen.

QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION.

a) What, if any, is the danger, or sin, in wanting wealth, in earning, holding, or spending money, and in controlling property?
b) How prevalent is covetousness among the people you know?
c) What difference does it make whether a man searches for gold or for God?
d) Under what conditions may we be Christian in our business and social life?
e) What does this mean: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth"?
f) How may one become a slave of his possessions?

1. WHO ARE COVETOUS?
   a) What is covetousness?
   b) Just why is covetousness "the arch enemy of Jesus' philosophy of stewardship"?

c) What persons are apt to be covetous? Why?
d) How may a nation be covetous? A poor man? One without income?

2. Covetousness Misleading.
a) Why cannot a man love other men and money at the same time? Are we ever warranted in "loving" things?
b) Why is personal affection purifying?

3. Vices That Follow Covetousness.
a) What sins naturally follow covetousness? What virtues?
b) In what way must consecration be final, once for all? How must it be progressive, daily, hourly?

4. Purpose Affected by Covetousness.
a) What difference does covetousness make in our attitude toward our work? Toward God? Toward the needy? Toward our fellows? Toward eternal life?
b) Does our Father desire that we sacrifice? Practice asceticism? Have abundance?
c) How may we discover if we own, or are owned? Belong to the Kingdom, or hold a church membership as a convenience?

5. The Day of Reckoning.
a) Why is faithful stewardship an evidence of sanity? Sound ethics? Morality?
b) Why is the rich farmer called "The Rich Fool"?

6. Distorted Vision.
a) What is luxury? Necessity? Should all be limited to a "living wage"? If we neglect our needy fellow, against whom do we sin?

7. Saving Rich Men.
a) What is it "to renounce all"? What is "full consecration"? How may we acknowledge complete reliance on God?
b) Why does the Heavenly Bridegroom refuse to "marry for money"?
c) Are they promised prosperity who prove their faith by their paying?
d) Why is the love of money a root of all kinds of evil?

CHAPTER VIII

Stewardship and Property

THE Christianizing of property is probably the greatest task that confronts the Church of the twentieth century. When Horace Bushnell said, "One more revival—only one more—is needed, the revival of Christian stewardship, the dedication of the money power to God," he had the vision of a greater task than most people have visualized. Certainly, the Christian conquest of the whole realm of property, business, and industry was in his vision. The purpose of this chapter is to point out that one of the imperative tasks facing our century is the emancipation of the Church and society from the pagan ideas of property which seem to have been accepted by the successors of the early church leaders. This was part of the price which was paid for the official recognition of Christianity by the Roman Empire. It was a terrible price.

Perhaps the most drastic result of Pentecost was the attainment of the divine ideal of property as a stewardship. The story is to be found in the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where the early Christians come face to face not only with the greatness of their task but with the unspeakable joy of spiritual fellowship with their Lord. What matter that their lives are threatened, or that they are warned not to preach any more in the Name? What matters that persecution is growing more intense, that many have lost possessions and employment, and others have been disowned by relatives and forced to seek shelter elsewhere? Singing in their hearts is the enthusiasm of a great experience. They are entrusted with the great commission of spreading abroad the gospel of their risen Lord.

One difficulty looms on the horizon—it is that of material support. How are the persecuted, the unemployed, and the missionaries to be supported? Many a man in every age has fallen from the heights of moral and spiritual heroism when the material support of himself and his family has been threatened; but this was not the case in the early Church. The Holy Spirit shook the room where the Christians prayed; the revival fires burned more intensely than before; and in the heat of these fires came forth the vision of a great Brotherhood, in which the *material* as well as the spiritual welfare of every member was to be the concern of every other member. Luke, who tells the story, says: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that *aught of the things which he possessed was his own*" (Acts 4:32).

Now, this did not mean communism, as some have attempted to say; it was *stewardship!* For the first time since the dawn of creation the angels of heaven looked down on a church that gave anything like a perfect acceptance of the divine principle of God's ownership

of all property. Pentecost had brought to light what God had been trying for centuries to instill in the heart of his Church: *property is to be held by individuals as a stewardship for the Brotherhood of the Kingdom.* This is as far removed from "communism" as paganism from Christianity. When not one of the disciples "said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own," this meant that his possessions belonged not to the Brotherhood but to God. There was evidently no attempt on the part of the leaders of the Church to secure from its members a legal or moral right to personal possessions in the name of the Brotherhood. "There was no least compulsion among them," says Harvey Reeves Calkins, "neither was there any general conversion of possessions and goods into money for the purpose of general distribution, but only 'as every man had need.' This last statement is twice repeated, and wholly discredits various attempts to make the New Testament sponsor for fantastic schemes of property division."

The monumental truth is that the early Church accepted as practical and binding the divine principle that property actually belongs to God, who gives it to men *only in trust.* As an early church writer says, "Our possessions belong to God, to be used for the Brotherhood."

The next chapter in the history of the Church is the story of the great apostasy. About the year 323, after long generations of persecution, Emperor Constantine was baptized a Christian, and Christianity was recognized by the Roman Empire. Then came the compromise, and afterward tragedy!

Surely the tragedies cannot be overestimated that have resulted from the lost opportunity of Christianity, when, flushed with its great victory in winning recognition at home, it compromised its pure doctrine concerning property to follow the lure of pagan prac-

tices. Bishop Charles Gore, of Oxford, has referred to this apostasy as the "disappointing fact that when Christianity became the established religion it did so little to impress the Christian idea of property upon the law and customs of the later empire."

And the disappointment here mentioned is the greater because the Christians of the first three centuries *did* keep their lights brightly burning, evidently holding fast to the creed of the early Church: "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (I John 3:17).

To this point consider some of the words of those leaders who immediately followed the apostles: "For if we are sharers in that which is imperishable, how much more in things perishable!" This latter statement concludes a dissertation on stewardship found in the early church catechism called *The Two Ways*. And there are many others:

> Rich is that man who hath much money, and in imitation of God, bestows from what he hath; for God giveth all things to all for his own creatures. Understand then, ye rich, that ye are in duty bound to do service, having received more than ye yourselves need. Learn that to others is lacking that wherein you superabound. Be ashamed of holding fast to what belongs to others, imitate God's equity and none shall be poor.
>
> —The Preaching of Peter (second century)

> For he who holds possessions as God's gifts, both ministering from them to God the Giver, unto man's salvation, and knowing that he possesses them for the brethren's sake rather than his own, . . . not being a slave of what he possesses, and not carrying them about in his soul, but ever laboring at some good and divine work, . . . he is the man deemed blessed by the Lord and called poor in spirit, . . . not one who could not live if not rich.
>
> —Clement of Alexandria (third century)

We who mingle in mind and soul have no hesitation as to fellowship in property. . . . After this example of equality, he who is a possessor on earth shares his returns and fruits with the Brotherhood, in being by his free bounties not only open-handed but also just, is an imitator of God the Father.

—TERTULLIAN (third century)

A careful reading of the foregoing quotations from prominant fathers of the first three centuries makes it evident that the Church of those years had not fallen away from the teachings of Jesus and Pentecost concerning God's ownership of wealth. After reviewing the whole field of these utterances, Bishop Frank Bartlett of Oxford, referring, in his introduction to *Property, Its Duties and Rights,* to the compromise that followed the Roman conquest, says:

On the whole a great chance was lost; and the social order, remaining at this crucial point unadjusted to the full spirit of the gospel of the Divine Father and human Brotherhood, came to react adversely on Christian ideals of property generally. Broadly speaking, the idea of property as a social and economic institution really remained pagan, and so far as embodied in the law, Roman in spirit and presuppositions.

Eighth Week—First Day

POSSESSIONS NOT EVIL

And the multitudes of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

—Acts 4:32

If we agree that the Christianizing of property is a major task confronting the progress of the Kingdom in

our century, then we must refresh our minds on how it was done on the Day of Pentecost: "Not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." Here was something new under the sun. Everyone had just as much of this world's goods as before, but no longer did he call them "my own." But whose were these things? The answer is they belonged to God! Just as they always had belonged—only the Pentecostal experience had made things clear. God in Christ had become so real to them that the truth of "God's ownership of all things" had become clear too. It always happens that way. Reality is our need!

And they were not just saying the words of a creed. They cashed up: "they had all things common." That did not mean that they went into communism; it did mean that the disciples were of "one heart and one soul" to the extent that they shared even their possessions, so that "distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." A new Church had been born for a New Age, the age of the sharing life. We must recapture that vision and that spirit.

READ ACTS 4:23-37

If half of the zeal and passion, half of the outpouring of life and treasure, of organization and efficiency, that the State has put into this war could be thrown into the cause of the Kingdom and the eternal verities, the world would soon be won for Christ.

—ADMIRAL BEATTY

The group of believers early developed a social conscience. Poverty was to be banished through an equable distribution of goods. The right to private property was voluntarily given up and provision for the comfort of all was made through the sale of real estate and the dedication of the proceeds to the common weal.

—ERNEST W. BURCH

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.
—Isaac Watts

O Spirit of God, who didst brood over the hearts of men from the beginning, brood over our hearts. We need thee. The whole world thirsts for thee. Press thyself in upon us until the Unseen becomes reality, and material things fade away before the glory of thy Presence. Oh, keep alive within us our hunger for the things of the Spirit until the dawn comes and we know as we are known. Amen.

Eighth Week—Second Day

THE LOVE OF MONEY

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men but unto God.

—Acts 5:3-4

It will be well to take another look at the story of Ananias and Sapphira. By so doing we will become aware of the everlasting battle of the Church to hold its members up to the standards of Christ. In yesterday's scripture we read that "not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." But Ananias and his wife seemed to be the exception. Or were they? Sometimes we see truth and fail to live up to it! What were the motives that prompted this early Christian to sell a "possession" and to "keep back part of the price"? The great hearted Barnabas had

seen the necessity of the Church for more money, and had set the example of good stewardship. For some reason Ananias wanted to do the same thing—and yet not wholeheartedly! Professor Ernest W. Burch says (*The Abingdon Bible Commentary,* p. 1101): "The deaths of the two persons concerned . . . are given as real deaths, sudden, awe-inspiring. . . . The context teaches that men both outside and within the church were impressed, even fearful. . . . The deed of Ananias and his wife was destructive. The brotherhood of this early community could not be spoiled from *without,* as the book of Acts shows. The life of the church was more seriously endangered by hypocrisy or treachery *within.*"

Treachery within! Is failure in the stewardship of money and property to be called "treachery within"? Then what can be said of the large percentage of the members of Christian churches of today who never subscribe to the missionary or local budgets of the churches? Are these to be numbered among those who "kept back part of the price"?

READ ACTS 2:43-47

He just cannot write his name to large checks. He does not know how. He has never learned. His hand is paralyzed.
—WILLIAM E. SWEET

The story of Ananias and Sapphira leaves the distinct impression that in the early days of the Church there prevailed a high ideal of honesty and unselfishness among the disciples, and the impression is further of an excellent discipline, no small part of which was due to the spiritual insight of the apostles. As in the Ananias case, the apostles were quick and certain in their moral judgments.

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still;

In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I do not care to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.
—JOAQUIN MILLER

May God the Father, and the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ build us up in faith and truth and love; and grant to us our portion among the saints with all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for all saints, for kings and rulers, for the enemies of the cross of Christ; and for ourselves we pray that our fruit may abound, and that we may be made perfect in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.
—BISHOP POLYCARP (A.D. 85)

Eighth Week—Third Day

THRIFTLESSNESS

"WHY I Gave Up Business to Teach" is the caption of a magazine article. Disgust for "the chase of the dollar" is the reason given. But one comes from reading the article with this question in mind: would it not have been a braver thing to continue in business in order to demonstrate that the passion for money-getting can be dominated by the Spirit of Christ? Jesus certainly taught that riches are not an evil thing in themselves. Indeed, to accept any other view is to rebuke the Almighty for having placed the gold and silver in the mountains, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles. He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much:

and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much.

—Luke 16:9-10

In this scripture Jesus points out that the "mammon of unrighteousness" may be the instrument through which the Kingdom of God is brought to consummation. This means that one may so invest his money in the Kingdom of God as to make for himself "friends" who will welcome him some day into the eternal tabernacles.

In this connection one cannot but think of the "friends" on the Other Shore who will one day gather around a great soul like the late John F. Goucher, who invested much money and much time in definite missionary projects at home and abroad.

This scripture is little known because it has been buried for centuries in misunderstanding resulting from the mistranslation by the authors of the King James Version. But there is a truth here that needs constantly to be proclaimed. Dr. Moffatt has translated it in these words, "I tell you, use mammon, dishonest as it is, to make friends for yourselves, so that when you die they may welcome you to the eternal abodes." The Weymouth translation is similar. And if one should be tempted to think of money-making or money-spending as a subject unworthy of the Christian pulpit—as did the Pharisees (v. 14)—then one should read the words of the Master: "He who is faithful with a trifle is also faithful with a large trust" (Moffatt).

READ LUKE 16:1-15

Jesus continually said, Be thrifty and accumulate, but do it in the best interest of your family, your friends, your neighbors, your community, your countrymen, and the entire world, that all may be healthier, happier, and more

prosperous. This is what he would recommend. By so doing one would make enduring investments which moth and rust would not corrupt, and which thieves would not steal.

—Roger W. Babson

What is the goal of a human soul?
Is it just to acquire a name?
To write a score of brave deeds, or more,
On a vanishing scroll of fame?

Or is it the lifting of heart to God,
The reaching of hand to man,
The finding of life in the losing of self,
And bettering the world as we can?

—W. D. Woodward

O God, we heartily pray thee to send thy Holy Spirit into the hearts of them that possess the grounds and pastures of the earth, that they, remembering themselves to be thy tenants, may not rack or stretch out the rents of their houses or lands, nor yet take unreasonable fines or moneys, after the manner of covetous worldlings, but may so let them out that the inhabitants thereof may be able to pay the rents, and live, and nourish their families, and remember the poor. Give them grace also to consider that they too are but strangers and pilgrims in this world, having here no dwelling place, but seeking one to come; that they, remembering the short continuance of this life, may be content with that which is sufficient, and not join house to house and land to land, to the impoverishment of others, but may so behave themselves in letting their tenements, lands and pastures, that after this life they may be received into everlasting habitations. Amen.

—Prayer Book of Edward VI

Eighth Week—Fourth Day

POSSESSIONS FOR SERVICE OR POWER?

WHILE property and capital are to be regarded as tools by which the Christian is to work, Jesus taught that *a love of the tools* is not only unwise but *absolutely wicked.* The big reason, of course, is that a love of the tools keeps us from remembering the purpose for which the tools were given. As a result, life becomes dwarfed because we live for "the means" instead of "the end" of our existence.

But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

—I Timothy 6:9-10

Indeed, love of money distorts the whole vision of life, and leads not only to wicked practices but to certain alienation from God. One of the most needed but most neglected warnings that ever came from the lips of Jesus was "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth" (Matt. 6:19). In his later life John Wesley said: "I do not remember that in threescore years I have ever heard a sermon preached on the danger of riches—and what author has declared it from the press? I have frequently touched upon it, but I have never either published or preached any sermon expressly on the subject. It is high time I should."

In studying these words of Jesus the emphasis should, of course, be placed on the word "yourselves." Lay not up for *yourselves.* There is no injunction against building up capital *for use.* To destroy or dis-

count capital is like discounting the value of the timberlands that store up the rains and snows to keep running the mighty rivers when the summer heat licks up their flowing waters. The Kingdom of God has long suffered because church members have not realized that money is a major means to the building of the Kingdom. But Jesus' warning is "Lay not up for *yourselves.*" The Christian is the steward of all that God has entrusted to him. It is his only in trust.

READ I TIMOTHY 6:6-13

He had died dwarfed had he not broken the bonds of mere money-getting; would never have known himself had he not learned how to spend it; and ambition itself could not have shown him a straighter road to fame.

—WOODROW WILSON

They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies. Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same divine principle, the root and record of their friendship.

—WILLIAM PENN

I have to live with myself, and so
I want to be fit for myself to know.
I want to be able as days go by
Always to look myself straight in the eye.
I don't want to stand with the setting sun
And hate myself for the things I've done.

—Author unknown

O Lord, turn thy light this morning upon any unconsecrated portion of my heart. Help me to know myself. Search thou my soul; discover to me the hidden idols. Help me to tear them down. O thou blessed Redeemer, break down every idol throne; reign supreme, and reign alone. Amen.

Eighth Week—Fifth Day

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY

But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Elsewhere we have noted that many parables of Jesus deal with the stewardship of property, but here is one that deals with *the basic premise of Christian stewardship, which is God's sovereign ownership.* The key to the understanding of this "raciest of the stories told by Jesus" is in the question "And then whose shall these things be?"

The "certain rich man" had foolishly said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"; and then God had jarred him into reality with the bad news "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee."

Then straightway Jesus attacked the pagan philosophy of rich and poor men alike: "Can I not do as I please with my own?" Jesus' answer was "But you don't own anything! You are only guests of God for a few brief years."

J. A. Findlay wisely remarks that "the man was a fool because he tried to be merry by himself." But the sin was deeper than that! The man had left God and God's warnings out of his reckoning. Thus there seems to be a direct relation between today's scripture and the well-known comment of Jesus "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth." You may get all you can, and save all you can, but only in order that you may give all you can to the Kingdom of God and the Brotherhood of men. Whether you like it or not,

this life is a stewardship and no man liveth unto himself!

READ LUKE 12:13-21

Get all you can; save all you can; give all you can.
JOHN WESLEY

For God provides the good things of the world to serve the needs of nature, by the labors of the plowman, the skill and pains of the artisan, and the dangers and traffic of the merchant; these men are, in their calling, the ministers of the Divine Providence and the stewards of creation, and the servants of the great family of God. . . . So that no man can complain that his calling takes him off from religion; his calling itself, and his very worldly employment in honest trades and offices, is a serving of God.
—JEREMY TAYLOR

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.
—ISAAC WATTS

Blessed be thou, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. . . . For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding. . . . O Lord, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee. Amen.
—KING DAVID

Eighth Week—Sixth Day

DISCIPLESHIP AND POSSESSIONS

Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would. And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost.

—John 6:10-12

Christian stewardship teaches that *alongside of the sin of loving money is the companion sin of thriftlessness and waste.* When Jesus said, "Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost," he was issuing a warning against the careless use of anything which a needy humanity can use. Thriftlessness is not generally the sin of the producer of wealth. More often it is the sin of the poor, and the sin of the children of the rich. A generation ago Herbert Hoover estimated that the United States spent a million dollars a day in superfluous eating in hotels and restaurants.

It should be remembered that the bases of great fortunes were laid by men of thrift. George Eastman, of kodak fame, began work at three dollars a week, and saved thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents the first year. By virtue of thrifty habits he saved the four thousand dollars which gave him his chance when opportunity beckoned. Out of fifty of America's foremost business and financial leaders today, twenty-four were born poor and seventeen were born in moderate circumstances. Every one of them started with habits of thrift.

It is apparent that if Jesus were on earth today he

would urge every individual and family to maintain a budget, break habits of wastefulness, and keep expenditures well within earnings. Christian stewardship has to do not only with the acquiring of property but with wise saving and careful spending. Consecrated money goes too far in the Kingdom conquest for Christians to be careless in the use of it. But the deeper reasons for Jesus' urge "to gather up the fragments that nothing be lost" is the effect which thriftlessness and carelessness have on character and the spiritual life.

READ JOHN 6:22-27

For upwards of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can, and give all I can, that is, all I have.

—JOHN WESLEY (last entry in his Journal)

The Christians were a persecuted body. They had no power of controlling the law of the society of the empire, but within their own voluntary society the claim of the Brotherhood was paramount.

—BISHOP CHARLES GORE

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life from aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin into his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

—EMILY DICKINSON

O Lord, the Lord whose ways are right, keep us in thy mercy from lip-service and empty forms; from having a name that we live, but being dead. Help us to worship thee by righteous deeds and lives of holiness; that our prayer also may be set forth in thy sight as the

incense, and the lifting up of our hands be as an evening sacrifice. Amen.

—CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

Eighth Week—Seventh Day

THE FIRST TEST OF STEWARDSHIP

And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.

—Leviticus 25:23

Is it not a significant thing that when Jehovah led the Israelites into possession of the land of Canaan that he made it emphatic that the land was *his,* given to the people only in trust? (See Cushman, *Will a Man Rob God?* p. 30.) They were not allowed to sell the land "in perpetuity." This was the everlasting reminder that they were not to inhabit this earth "in perpetuity." The book of Leviticus is full of reminders of the brevity of man's sojourn here on this earth. The Year of Jubilee outlined in today's scripture reading is such a reminder: (*a*) an additional Sabbatical Year to be kept; (*b*) all slaves to be liberated; (*c*) *all leases on land to expire.* And because "man goeth to his long home." But God stays on, forever trying to teach a new generation of his children the principles of good stewardship.

Tennyson does not quite speak the truth in those familiar lines:

> Man may come and man may go,
> But I go on forever.

But God does carry on forever and forever trying to teach the endless procession of men that life is a brief stewardship and—to the faithful—death is an open door into a more glorious Beyond. Dr. Moffatt has

added great illumination to the words of our scripture: "No land is to be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine, and you are only guests of mine, passing wayfarers." Let us repeat those words: "Guests of mine!" "Passing wayfarers!" How wonderful to be the guest of God!

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

—Isaac Watts

Read Leviticus 25:17-24; 35, 38

If the authority of Christ stops at the bank vaults and the factory gates and outside the storehouses of the profiteer, then the religion of Christ will become a hissing and a by-word.

—Stitt Wilson

We face the tragedy of a dying world, and the peril of a nation rich beyond all compare, called of God to service, and hesitating in her choice between a life of sacrificial endeavor and one of selfish indulgence. This constitutes an emergency unparalled in all the Christian centuries.

—S. Earl Taylor

It is not the deed we do,
Though the deed be never so fair—
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,
Hidden with holy care
In the heart of the deed so fair.

The love is the priceless thing,
The treasure our treasure must hold,
Or ever the Lord will take the gift,
Or tell the worth of the gold,
By the love that cannot be told.

—Harriet McEwen Kimball

O Lord, . . . thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. Amen.

—King David

QUESTIONS

Introduction.

a) What do we mean by "Christianizing property"? How do you Christianize your possessions?
b) What pagan conceptions of property did the Christian Church accept from the Roman state?
c) What is the relation of a man to his possessions which comes out of the Pentecostal experience?
d) Can we be Christians without brotherhood?
e) Do you consider that all material values belong to God? What do you do about it?

1. Possessions Not Evil.
   a) Why is capital, stored up value, necessary to the Kingdom?

2. The Love of Money.
   a) How may those who become rich avoid "foolish and hurtful lusts"? Distinguish between "giving up" and "administering" property.
   b) What are the dangers arising from riches?

3. Thriftlessness.
   a) Is thrift a virtue?
   b) Has the personal or family budget anything to do with religion?

4. Possessions for Service or Power?
   a) May a man be a better citizen or Christian if he has

property? No property? Much property? Little property?
b) What is the relation between property and freedom?
c) Can you distinguish between property "for use" and property "for power"?
d) What is the Christian concept of "property"?
e) Is property necessarily an obstacle to brotherhood?
f) Why is it wrong to dodge taxes?

5. The Individual and the Community.
   a) Harmonize the subservience of the individual to the community with true democracy.
   b) Does divine supremacy prove the necessity for autocracy, or pave the way for freedom and democracy?
   c) What is Jesus' property test for his followers?

6. Discipleship and Possessions.
   a) Name the things you regard as superior to personality.
   b) Can we and our nation be economically sound if profits, income, property, and wealth are held superior to the workers?
   c) What is the purpose of property? Why do you desire property?
   d) How may a Christian grow?

7. The First Test of Stewardship.
   a) What evidence do you find in the Bible that a man must use his possessions righteously and unselfishly? In experience? In history?

CHAPTER IX

Business and Stewardship

AKIN to the task of bringing the Church back to the scriptural teaching concerning the stewardship of property is the companion task of Christianizing business and industry in the twentieth century. As Bacon said, "Business should be conducted to the glory of God and to the welfare of the worker."

There are at least two reasons for the close relation of these tasks. In the first place, no field of human endeavor has suffered more from the early apostasy from Jesus' teaching of property than has industry; and, second, Christianity cannot dominate the world until the whole of human life has been redeemed. Christianity cannot halt before the gods of industry and remain true to Christ. We are stewards of the total task. Jesus demands the conquest of every phase of life.

Business and religion cannot be separated. The demand that the Church forget to be concerned with the problems of industry does not originate in heaven.

Christianity must be concerned with industry because, like his Lord, the Christian must be concerned with humanity—especially where humanity is in distress. And no person knowing the facts will dispute the statement that the world of industry "is a world of distress, selfish conflict, almost of anarchy today." On every hand men are asking the way out. The severest test that faces Christianity lies here. Will Irwin in his volume *The Next War* said, "Two great tasks lie before humanity and the race of the twentieth century." One of them he indicated as the "final elimination of war." The other, he said, is to "put under the control of true morals and of democracy the great power of human production which came in the nineteenth century." This can mean nothing else but the Christianizing of industry and the recognition of business as a stewardship.

Indeed, the Christianizing of business may well be regarded as the twin problem with the elimination of war, for there can be no ultimate hope of warring successfully against war until we can Christianize property and industry. Returning from a trip to the Orient, Harry Emerson Fosdick, speaking to this point, indicated the peril to world peace from business enterprises which have for their dominating motive the getting of profits. He asked: "Have Western nations clean hands themselves when they condemn Japan's policy? . . . We have all got to repent together. Selfishness has controlled the goals of Japan and Western nations in China, which has been regarded as an orange to be squeezed. . . . If Western nations do not repent of their godless gobbling of the world, let there be no pious preachments of Peace on earth, good will to men. If selfishness is still to be in power, there will be

war in the Far East, and when it comes it will be a real war." These words were written in 1921.

And what the lust for dividends is doing in the Orient it has done for long years in other places. It was "profits" that led Germany into the crusade of commercialism which ended in the first World War. It was a similar story that led up to World War II. History records that when Bismarck took his first steps toward a colonial empire he made it clear that he was under pressure from commercial and industrial circles. He wanted "not provinces, but commercial enterprises." Other nations have been driven by the same motive—and are still driven. Leonard Woolf in *Economic Imperialism* showed how demoralizing has been this race for business, a race carried on with cruel disregard for life or property, in order that big commercial concerns might have raw materials, and markets at their own price. For instance, he submits the following figures showing what shares the different European states have taken in the partition of Africa. The seriousness of this indictment will be better understood when it is realized that only 390 square miles have been left to the free states of the dark continent. The table shows the area in square miles seized by the different nations:

	AREA	POPULATION
France	4,200,000	25,000,000
Britain	3,300,000	35,000,000
Germany	1,100,000	12,000,000
Belgium	900,000	7,000,000
Portugal	800,000	8,000,000
Italy	600,000	1,000,000
Spain	75,000	200,000

In commenting, Mr. Woolf said: "The military nature of this expansion of the French and British empires must not, however, obscure the compelling part played

in it by economic motives. The weapon of expansion was war for conquest. The *aims* of expansion were *markets, raw materials,* and *profits.*"

Now the story of economic imperialism is the sadder because it has been conducted oftentimes by Christian men and so-called Christian nations who have had one standard for Sunday and another for the market place. "Life must be unified," says Roger Babson. "We have discredited the double standard which permits a man to separate his business and his personal conduct, or his weekday dealings and his Sabbath professions."

But altogether apart from the fact that economic imperialism certainly leads to war and bloodshed, the *distress of humanity in time of peace* is what furnishes the greatest indictment against the present industrial system. If it be objected that the industrial problem is complex, it must also be affirmed that it is *desperate.* If it is to be faced with caution, it is also to be faced with courage. Human lives are at stake, and more—the honor of the Church is in the balance.

In the first place, it should be understood that neither capital nor labor is to be blamed alone, nor is the industrial distress to be laid at the door of these two alone while the Church goes scot free. Said William Austin Smith in *The Churchman*:

> In the present industrial conflict I do not see unmistakably on either side the face of the Master. I can find it neither among those who claim to be conservative nor those who wish to be called radical. Both wish to possess and to hold. Both love riches; both make property the pearl of great price. When the labor leader sits across the table from the spokesman of capital in the heated conferences now taking place, Christ is not in the discussion. It is a battle of wits; its weapons are cleverness, suspicion, the zest to keep what one has and to get more. I do not impugn the justice of the claims of either side; but the conflict has too little to do with Christianity, for the moment Christ enters a prob-

lem, the air is charged with a new principle. Love asks, "What can I give?" The world asks, "What can I get?"

Moreover, if capital and labor are both guilty, it must be kept in mind, in the second place, that both are suffering along with a suffering humanity. I am not sure that Roger Babson is altogether sound in the following statement, but there is enough truth here to challenge our thinking. He says in *Fundamentals of Prosperity*:

> There is one thing I am sure of, and that is that the present system does not work. The present system is failing in getting men to produce. . . . Our industrial system has resulted in almost stultifying men economically and making most of them economically nonproductive. Why? I do not know. I simply see what happens. The salvation of our industries depends on discovering something that will revive in a man that desire to produce and that joy in production which he had instinctively when he was a small boy.

On this very point Dr. Smith continues:

> The most terrible thing with which we are confronted today is the loss of morale among workmen. Once capital said, "The public be damned!" Labor is now making this same jaunty assertion. Among the workers of the world there is growing everywhere a sullen spirit of irresponsibility, insolence, and a loss of craftsmanship and a love of the job. If this goes on, we shall witness the collapse of the industrial fabric. . . . We are witnessing today tests of strength between labor and capital. Whichever wins, the kingdom of God will lose.

What is the way out? We venture to assert that the problem is not primarily a question of economic systems—it is primarily a matter of religion and of Christian stewardship. Indeed, it is increasingly possible to back up this kind of assertion with splendid utterances from the lips of strong business men all over the land. Listen to Mr. Babson again:

Labor and capital are of little value until they are composed of people filled with the Spirit of God. The industrial problem will never be solved by employers' associations or labor associations or consumers' associations; but only as all get together as brothers filled with the Spirit of God. . . . Oh, if men would think more of religion and less of commodities, bank clearings, foreign trade, and immigrations!

In that splendid collection of essays *Property, Its Duties and Rights,* the editor of the volume explains why no essay is included on *some particular plan* of economic reconstruction by saying, "The primary task is to discover the ideal of property." Just so. Christ does not propose any particular program, but he does insist that a program will be forthcoming when business men shall dedicate their talents to God. During the two world wars America saw on a great scale the stewardship of citizenship. It was inspiring to see great industrial leaders ready to sacrifice personal interests in order to win the war. These men did not ask for programs; they came with *a great passion to serve,* and *made their own programs.* But the passion to serve came *first.*

Ninth Week—First Day

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

It is a significant thing that when the multitude came to John the Baptist asking, "What shall we do?" he told them honestly to face the ungodly social order of their day, and to consecrate to God their own possessions and their business dealings.

And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. And there came also

publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do?

—Luke 3:10-14*a*

Christianity is unfinished business. This fact underlies Jesus' command "Ye therefore shall be perfect." Paul took his Lord's words at their face value, and cried, "I press on!" Before the Church or any individual can do very much toward Christianizing industry there must be a conviction of sin—a keen realization that there is "unfinished business," and that there is no phase of human activity, no compartment in the human heart, which Christ does not claim as his field of conquest. "Either Christ is Lord of all or not Lord at all." A recent writer has said that "the so-called revivals of religion keep us safely off these sins in which great economic wrongs and social injustices are flagrant." It is hard to believe that such words state the whole truth. But in any case we need a new generation of John Baptists who shall help us to see the ramifications of our sins. The first step to the solution of the industrial problem is an honest facing of the fact that industry is not deeply and thoroughly Christian; that it must be Christianized; and the responsibility rests not primarily upon some industrial experts but upon the Christian business men of the land.

READ LUKE 3:3-15

To reach old age possessed only of money and a desire to increase it, is not success in life. It is a sad and terrible failure; better die a pauper in purse than a pauper in soul; better fail to get money than to allow money to get you.

—Author unknown

I thank thee just for life, the chance to live,
To be alive! So great thy gift, if thou does nothing give

Besides, it is enough to breathe thy air,
To walk this mountain sod,
To feel the play of mighty winds,
To look thee in the face and call thee God.

—R. S. C.

O God, we pray for thy church, which is set today amid the perplexities of a changing order, and face to face with a great new task. We remember with love the nurture she gave to our spiritual life in its infancy, the tasks she set for our growing strength, the influence of the devoted hearts she gathers, the steadfast power for good she has exerted. When we compare her with all other human institutions we rejoice, for there is none like her. But when we judge her by the mind of her Master, we bow in pity and contrition. Oh, baptize her afresh in the life-giving spirit of Jesus! Grant her a new birth, though it be with travail of repentance and humiliation. Bestow upon her a more imperious responsiveness to duty, a swifter compassion with suffering, and an utter loyalty to the will of God. Put upon her lips the ancient gospel of her Lord. Help her to proclaim boldly the coming of the kingdom of God and the doom of all that resist it. Fill her with the prophet's scorn of tyranny, and with a Christlike tenderness for the heavy-laden and down-trodden. Give her faith to espouse the cause of the people, and in their hands that grope after freedom and light to recognize the bleeding hands of the Christ.

—WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH

Ninth Week—Second Day

THE PURPOSE OF BUSINESS

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And an-

other said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. . . . Then the master of the house being angry said . . . I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Luke 14:18-19, 21*b*, 24

The trouble with the excuse makers in today's scripture comes from their giving precedence to anything else—however good in itself—over the Kingdom of God. Jesus declares that none who hold the Kingdom second can enter therein. Jesus' gospel of stewardship maintains that business cannot be truly Christian while it is conducted *primarily for profits*. For the Master declared that the Kingdom of Heaven should be the first thing in any man's life. The ultimate reason for this lies in the fact that neither "profits" nor any other thing finally satisfies, as Robert Service indicates in these lines:

I wanted the gold, and I sought it;
I scrabbled and mucked like a slave.
Was it famine or scurvy—I fought it;
I hurled my youth into a grave.

I wanted the gold, and I got it—
Came out with a fortune last fall—
Yet somehow life's not what I thought it,
And somehow the gold isn't all.

READ LUKE 14:15-24

How difficult it is for the business man to live unselfishly! He must bear the handicap of a life whose main purpose is the accumulation of money. . . . Who is the most successful business man? Not necessarily the man who has the largest bank account; that is one measure of success, but not the finest. The most successful business man is he who

renders the greatest service to mankind, and whose life is most useful.

—William E. Sweet

To love someone more dearly every day,
To help a wandering child to find his way,
To ponder o'er a noble thought, and pray,
And smile when evening falls:
This is my task.

To follow truth as blind men long for light,
To do my best from dawn of day till night,
To keep my heart fit for His holy sight,
And answer when He calls:
This is my task.

—Maude Louise Ray

Lord of the great sacrifice, restrain our eagerness for the things that are seen. Thy cross is our rebuke. Increase our spending for the things eternal. Lord of the sinless life, our hope is to become like thee. Fulfill our hearts in service, that our hope be not in vain. Lord of the holiest joy—the joy of boundless giving—teach us thy grace of losing, that our joy may indeed be full. The world counteth all things lost if it gain not the things it may reckon. Help us to count all things but loss, to win thee, the wealth unmeasured. Amen.

—Bishop L. J. Birney

Ninth Week—Third Day

BUSINESS PREVENTING BROTHERHOOD

Jesus' gospel of stewardship maintains that business cannot be actually Christian while it *interferes with the ideals of Christian brotherhood,* which must always be the case as long as the motive to get profits dominates.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

–Romans 12:9-11

In today's scripture note that Paul intends that one may be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," and at the same time, "not slothful" in business. In other words, the ideals of Jesus are workable in our practical world.

In one of his poems Whittier flashes a brief picture of love's contribution to life against the sad picture of existence where man is in unfriendly competition with man. He begins in these words:

Still sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged beggar sunning.

He paints for us a country schoolhouse, and then the picture of the little boy and the little girl walking home bashfully together—he, ashamed because of his failure in the recently finished spelling match; and she, sorry because she went above him:

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because," —the brown eyes lower fell,—
"Because, you see, I love you!"

With pathetic touch the poet makes this observation of the after years:

Still memory to a gray-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him

Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her,—because they love him.

The lesson here is that business can be Christianized in the market place if we can keep love alive in the heart.

READ ROMANS 12:9-21

Carlyle was forever insisting that the pursuit of wealth is not a "human bond"; and Mr. L. P. Jacks, commenting, says; "Seekers of buried treasure invariably quarrel among themselves for reasons which are manifest to a child. It makes no difference whether it is hidden in a pirates' cavern or in the bowels of the earth. They may arrange the most equitable scheme for the division of the spoils, and seal their mutual loyalty with fearful oaths, but before the voyage is over the captain will be dangling at the yard arm, and the dark will be slippery with the blood of half the crew."

—EDWIN M. POTEAT

Let thy high manhood sacred be,
And lift thy calling up to thee;
Be true thyself, and thou shalt find
An answering echo in thy mind.
Keep thou thy faith with men, and see
How men will keep their faith with thee.

—HENRY S. KENT (to a youth entering business)

Blessed Lord, who for our sakes wast content to bear sorrow and want in death, grant unto us such a measure of thy Spirit that we may follow thee in all self-denial and tenderness of soul. Help us by thy great love to succor the afflicted, to relieve the needy and destitute, to share the burden of the heavy-laden, and ever to see thee in all the poor and desolate. Amen.

—DAVID R. PORTER

Ninth Week—Fourth Day

BUSINESS CAUSING WAR

Jesus' gospel of Christian stewardship maintains that business cannot be Christian so long as it divides men into warring groups. One of the pathetic, although encouraging, signs of the times is the way in which the different industrial groups claim Jesus Christ as their particular patron. For instance, Sarah N. Cleghorn says:

> Thanks to Saint Matthew, who had been
> At mass-meetings in Palestine,
> We know whose side was spoken for
> When Comrade Jesus had the floor.
>
> Ah, let no local him refuse!
> Comrade Jesus hath paid his dues.
> Whatever other be debarred,
> Comrade Jesus hath his red card.

Note the different attitude which the Apostle Paul maintains in his exhortation to the Philippians: God is no respecter of persons; he is concerned with all kinds and conditions of men, regardless of whether they belong to your union or your club or your country or your church. Can you claim Christ when you are fighting to get something from somebody else that he is ready to fight to retain?

If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting

other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.

—Philippians 2:1-4

READ COLOSSIANS 3:23-25

A little thought will show you how vastly your own happiness depends on the way other people bear themselves toward you. The looks and tones at your breakfast table, the conduct of your fellow workers or employers, the faithful or unreliable men you deal with, what people say to you on the street, the letters you get, the friends or foes you meet—these things make up very much of the pleasure or misery of your day. Turn the idea around, and remember that just so much are you adding to the pleasure or misery of other people's days.

G. S. MERRIAM

Love's on the high road,
Love's in the by-road,
Love's in the meadow, and
Love's in the mart!

And down every by-way
Where I've taken my way
I've met Love a-smiling, for
Love's in my heart.

DANA BURNET

Eternal God, our heavenly Father, sharpen, we beseech thee, our spiritual perception, that we may know thy will. Grant thy cleansing to our souls, that we may sanctify all things we touch. May the spirit of self-abandonment be ours. O thou who didst say, "I must work the works of him that sent me," help us to do thy bidding all this day; and when the evening comes, grant us the joy of thy "Well done." Amen.

—J. HOMER SLUTZ

Ninth Week—Fifth Day

ACKNOWLEDGING GOD IN BUSINESS

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.

—II Thessalonians 3:6

Paul is using rather strong language in this letter to the Thessalonians, but the subject of his communication is "business," and this matter requires plain language, to say the least. Evidently there are two sides to this everlasting matter of business. The first insistence of the gospel of stewardship is that no industry can be Christian as long as profits are made at the expense of the spiritual, moral, or physical welfare of the workers. Josiah Strong insisted that a tenement house could kill men just as surely as an ax. The same thing is true with factories or other industries where profits blind the eyes to the welfare of the worker or the good of the community. Frank Bartlett said: "The ancient church was very sensitive about morally doubtful trades, and refused to receive for God's service, especially the relief of the poor, . . . anything made from such concerns, or to accept as members those who persisted in such trades."

But on the other hand, the early Church seems also to have insisted upon the faithful stewardship of the individual. "If any will not work, neither let him eat" (II Thess. 3:10*b*). Today's scripture has been translated by Dr. Moffatt in the following striking phrases: "Shun any brother who is loafing, instead of following the rule you received from us. For you know very well how to copy us; we did not loaf in your midst, we did not take free meals from anyone; no, toiling hard at

our trade, we worked night and day, so as not to be a burden to any of you. Not that we have no right to such support; it was simply to give you a pattern to copy" (II Thess. 3:6-10). Evidently the Christian must stand up to the obligation of stewardship—whether he be the employer or the employed. As Paul says, "Each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

READ I THESSALONIANS 4:9-12

Scrooge: But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.

Jacob Marley's Ghost: Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!

—CHARLES DICKENS

If on some holy mountainside
I hear thy voice and glimpse thy face—
Through all my years I'll bless the day
I met thee on the mountain way!
But better still, dear Lord, I pray
That thou wilt give me grace to be
In rich companionship with thee
Along this busy market place;
Here let me see thee face to face!

—R. S. C.

The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man; help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces; let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonored; and grant us in the end the gift of sleep. Amen.

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Ninth Week—Sixth Day

BUSINESS AND THE GOLDEN RULE

All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

—Matthew 7:12

Jesus' gospel of Christian stewardship further maintains that *industry is not Christian until it is run according to the Golden Rule.* Two gentlemen were making such an assertion when one of them observed that no individual could ever afford to make the experiment of putting the Golden Rule into industry unless he could have united with him a thousand righteous employers who were ready to make the same adventure. But such an assertion runs counter to all experience. Progress has always been started by some lone pioneer. Indeed, such is the case in industry. The proprietor of a Cincinnati concern, after a remarkable adventure in business stewardship, said: "I have regarded the Golden Rule as the divine law governing industrial and economic law in the universe today. I do not say it has solved all labor troubles in our factory; nay, it has done more—it has eliminated all labor troubles during the most trying industrial period in the world's history. I do not say it has driven out hatred, strife, and selfishness; it has done more—it has ushered in good will, contentment, and co-operation."

READ LUKE 6:31-38

The recent act of the five hundred employees of the NCM Company, which is operated on the Golden Rule basis, has won nation-wide approval. Both employer and employees had profited materially as well as spiritually to a surprising

extent by the introduction of the Golden Rule into the business. The employees, not to be outdone in well-doing, *have now decided voluntarily to surrender their jobs for a month in order to give work to the unemployed of other factories.*

—From an editorial

Is thy cruse of comfort wasting?
  Rise and share it with another,
And through all the years of famine
  It shall serve thee and thy brother.
Is thy burden hard and heavy?
  Do thy steps drag heavily?
Help to bear thy brother's burden;
  God will bear both it and thee.

—Elizabeth Charles

Deliver us, O Lord, from low standards or carelessness of living. We would sit this day as a family group, like those families who sat upon the mountainside with Jesus, listening to the Beatitudes and learning the Golden Rule. Help us especially in these days when so much of hatred is abroad in the world to love even those who make themselves our enemies and to make them at last our friends. Amen.

—Albert W. Palmer

Ninth Week—Seventh Day

BUSINESS *VS.* WORKER

Beware lest thou forget Jehovah thy God . . . and lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers.

—Deuteronomy 8:11, 17-18

As a matter of practical experience it is not enough to point, in a general way, to the Golden Rule as the

solution of industrial problems, for Jesus' gospel of stewardship maintains that the ultimate acceptance of the Golden Rule in business, or anywhere else, depends on the acknowledgment of God's ownership of property and life. As Mr. Babson says, the fundamental conception is this: Is the wealth that comes to a man his, or is it a trust fund?

It may be that the editor of a great magazine is right in declaring that twenty leaders in our world of business, if they would unite their efforts and abilities, could change the whole industrial situation; but there is little hope that this beneficent result will be forthcoming unless those gentlemen are soundly converted to the point where they will accept Jesus' declaration, "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." George Innes has correctly interpreted the words of Jesus when he gives, both as the antidote for covetousness and the solution of the industrial problem, the four words: "Renounce ownership—accept stewardship."

READ LUKE 14:25-35

Exceeding gifts from God are not blessings, they are duties. They do not always increase a man's happiness; they always increase his responsibilities.

—CHARLES KINGSLEY

There is a destiny that makes us brothers,
None goes his way alone,
All that we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own.

—EDWIN MARKHAM

To the Master the kingdom of God is in the very midst of a world bustling with all sorts of ceaseless activities—where men are buying, selling, and getting gain. It is no part of his plan to segregate his followers in association camps or

cloistered cells. Rather would he have them carry the cross along the thronged thoroughfares, and into the very midst of the marts of trade and away to the farther horizon. In barter and in all the bustle of a workaday world Christians are to interpret the law of love in service and sacrifice.

—DAVID MCCONAUGHY

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord! Hear thou my cry. I need thee, for my heart is often blind; it is deceitful and desperately wicked. Ofttimes I cannot tell where heaven ends and hell begins. O Saviour of the world, thou who canst see the first faint beginnings of evil, have mercy upon me. Cleanse my vision, sensitize my soul, that my whole being, flooded with thy light, may cling unto thy paths of righteousness and truth. So glorify thyself in me this day; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION.

a) Why could men be Christian saints during the nineteenth century, under pagan theories of property, and not be able to in the twentieth century? Were they not just as truly their brother's keeper in the nineteenth century?

b) Is it possible to be both Christian and pagan? If so, what is the result? If not, what is the result?

c) How may business be recognized as a stewardship?

d) Why must business be Christianized before war can be abolished?

e) In spite of the selfish motives, has the control of weaker peoples by stronger been a blessing?

f) Is it normal for multitudes to be economically distressed in times of peace?

g) What must be the difference between a Christian solution of industrial difficulties and all other solutions?

h) Why must man create, construct, produce, or be unhappy?

i) Is Christian brotherhood possible under present social and industrial conditions?
j) Why is the industrial-economic problem primarily a matter of religion and stewardship?
k) Where can a man be definite in applying the principles of his religion?
l) How does a passion to serve differ from subserviency? What results from each?

1. Unfinished Business.
   a) In what way is "unfinished business" sin? Must we "finish" it, complete the job; or is "pressing forward" all that is expected of us?
   b) What is the first step toward Christianizing business?
2. The Purpose of Business.
   a) What should be the object of business?
   b) What is the promise to those who seek first the kingdom of God? Is it limited to any part of life?
   c) Is it more difficult for business men to be unselfish than for other men?
3. Business Preventing Brotherhood.
   a) What are some of the ideals of Christian brotherhood with which business now interferes?
4. Business Causing War.
   a) How may ambition be kept alive where men do not struggle with each other?
   b) What reasons have you to believe that Jesus respects all persons?
5. Acknowledging God in Business.
   a) How can a man enter the Kingdom and not admit that the earth is the Lord's?
6. Business and the Golden Rule.
   a) Is it possible for one man to practice the Golden Rule in industry when others may not be doing so?
   b) Is the Golden Rule a necessary part of faithful stewardship?
7. Business *vs.* Worker.
   a) Is industrial suicide as bad as suicide with knife, gun, or poison?

CHAPTER X

Stewardship and the Tithe

IT happened a few years ago in Germantown, Pennsylvania, when the writer was speaking to a national gathering of a great missionary society. The subject was "Stewardship." The speaker was trying to bring his hearers to see the imperativeness of stewardship as the Christian philosophy of life. He emphasized the Christianizing of money and property as the key to the solution of the problems of labor and capital, as well as other social and personal problems. He ended with the plea that Christians renounce ownership and subscribe to the platform of Jesus: "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

When the appeal was finished, an opportunity for questions was given. A keen young woman rose to her feet and said to the speaker: "I share your solicitude that Christian people shall be possessed by the stewardship consciousness. I believe it must come before Christ's Church can possess the world; but how can we bring this message home? I want to ask you one question. You are acquainted with many Christians who truly are possessed of the stewardship passion. How did it come about? Is it not true that most of them began with *the acceptance of the principle of the tithe?*"

There was only one possible answer to make to that question, and the speaker made it. "Yes, it is a fact that most of the people whom I know as good stewards of their possessions began by setting apart the first tenth of their income. Many of them have graduated into a real sense of God's ownership of all, but there is no question as to how they began. Whatever may be said about the perils of subscribing to the ancient law of the tithe, it certainly has proved an excellent schoolmaster to lead men into the experience of stewardship."

This fact of experience is not to be wondered at, for it is in accord with the proverb that we are not to despise the day of small beginnings. It may be that some exceptional persons do grasp the truth of the personal ownership of God all at once; but most persons absorb truth by degrees, and it probably remains true that the best hope there is of getting the average man really to feel the stewardship of property is by some beginning of systematic and proportionate support of God's program for the Kingdom—and the tithe is such a beginning. Moreover, it carries with it the advantage of having a great historical and spiritual background.

And the fact is that *this first step does bring a de-*

cidedly spiritual reaction. Here is a typical testimony: "I began tithing at the beginning of the new year, and it has brought a new joy into my Christian experience." It was the testimony of a young working girl; it can be duplicated a thousand times. Robert E. Speer has said: "I think every man will find, as every man who has passed through the experience can testify, that the acceptance of a principle like this marks a distinct era of a spiritual enlargement in his life." Moreover, the tenth as a beginning serves to test the honesty of purpose to accept stewardship as a life philosophy. It seems evident that there is little hope of combating the natural covetousness of the human heart, or of really furnishing an adequate support for the Kingdom program, until men are ready to set apart at least the tenth of their incomes as the earnest of their consecration.

There need be no mystery about it. With all the scriptural and historic associations which gather round it, it is a fair expression of the sincerity of our stewardship. In spite of all the Phariseeism and legalism which at times have concealed the spiritual meaning of the tithe, nevertheless, in general it has marked the beginning of a new era in the lives of those who have come to practice it. Therefore it seems just to think of the historical and scriptural tithe as:

The Acknowledgment of God's Ownership
The Token of Our Surrender
The Fellowship with His Purpose
The Pledge of Our Allegiance
The Witness of Our Faith

And, further, I do not think there can be any honest question of legalism. It seems fair to say that the average man, at least the one who has been challenged by stewardship, is not deterred from tithing so much by

the fear of legalism as by his *natural covetousness.* "Have you paid God's income tax?" was the caption of a stewardship message in a religious publication. And why not? Of course it ought to be a *voluntary payment;* but even should this not be the case, who loves his country less because he is compelled to pay an income tax? If there is any such citizen, certainly his patriotism is of a doubtful kind. George Clarke Peck tells of a mother who came to open her heart to her pastor concerning her affectionate but heedless son: "Sometimes he makes me so glad that I try to forget how he is breaking my heart. He will put his arms around me and give me the tenderest kiss, all of impulse, and then go out and do things that fairly slay me." Then with a look of exquisite suffering she added: "I would gladly do without the occasional rapturous kiss if I could see him steady and faithful." Does not that remind one of Jesus' words: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." It seems as if the time had gone by when Christians can talk stewardship and shy at the tithe!

In confirmation of our proposition that the tithe is generally the beginning of the stewardship alphabet, James L. Sayler, a member of the Chicago bar, some years ago made an interesting survey. Concerning his findings he wrote as follows: "It is sometimes said that the princely givers to the churches and to charitable and educational purposes have been men who in the beginning of their careers have set aside a tenth of their earnings to religious and charitable purposes. The statement has interested me, and I have made some effort to study such biographical matter as can be obtained, and through correspondence find the truth in these assertions." Mr. Sayler gives the result of his survey in a booklet entitled *American Tithers.*

After telling the story of more than a score of prominent American merchants, manufacturers, bankers, lawyers, and other leaders, he says he is convinced that these examples justify the conclusion that the decision to tithe has been an important first step in the making of a multitude of philanthropists and truly successful men.

As a final testimony, consider the words of an English manufacturer, William B. Hartley:

> Probably the greatest event of my life occurred on January 1st, 1877. On that day my wife and I made a written vow that we would devote a definite share of our income for religious and humanitarian work, and that this should be a first charge. Since that date we have often increased the proportion so that the original percentage is left far behind. The distribution of the Lord's portion has been the greatest joy of my life and a real means of grace. It has kept me in constant touch with the promotion of Christlike work of all kinds, and anything I have been able to do for Christ and humanity (including profit-sharing with my work people for over twenty years) has grown out of the vow made thirty-three years ago.

But there are some real difficulties in the way of securing a fair consideration of this subject. Apart from natural covetousness, the greatest hindrance to a fair hearing for the tithe is the *prejudice* that has grown up from the abuses which have followed in those countries where tithe paying has been made compulsory by legal statute, and the scandals that have arisen through the misappropriation and even deliberate stealing of the Lord's money. A volume could be written on this phase of the subject. We have only space for a single suggestive reference. Laws such as these from the English statutes under Henry VIII may have been well intended, but the reaction against them has greatly retarded beneficence in all Christendom:

Forasmuch as divers numbers of evil disposed persons . . . having no respect to their duties to Almighty God, but against right and good consciences have attempted to withhold . . . their tithes and oblations, as well personal as predial, due unto God and Holy Church, . . . through all the King's dominions every subject, according to the ecclesiastical laws and ordinances in this Church of England, and after the laudable usages and customs of the parish or other place where he dwelleth or abideth, shall yield and pay his tithe. (Statutes 27.)

Of course such laws as these resulting from the union of Church and state have produced whirlwinds of prejudice and opposition to the whole subject of tithing stewardship. The lesson is obvious: Tithe paying under the Christian system must always remain a matter between the individual and his God. But in saying this we are simply placing tithe paying on the same plane with any other Christian obligation. This is where Jesus seems to have left it—in any case, earnest scholars and Christian leaders in every century have thought that he did, and the evidence is available and demands honest consideration.

After eight years of careful research, in which he traced the history of tithing both in and out of the Scriptures, and in all the centuries since the early Church, Henry Lansdell in *The Sacred Tenth* concluded that the practice and preaching of tithing in the Christian Church

begins with the very commencement of church history, after that recorded in the New Testament, and continues steadily and increasingly, nearly every century yielding one or more writers who persistently uphold the doctrine that the tenth of a Christian's income is the property of and the least he should offer to God. . . . So again, conversely, while we have found all these testimonies in favor of the practice of tithing, we have not met with a single bishop of these centuries who ever condemned or opposed the doc-

trine, or even suggested that less than a tenth is the proper proportion to be set apart for God's service.

Tenth Week—First Day

OFFERINGS AND WORSHIP

IT is significant that *the earliest instance of worship recorded in the Bible* is accompanied by *the offering of material possessions to God.* Throughout the Scripture, generally speaking, the worshiper is not expected to come before the Lord empty-handed. This important principle was recorded in the early laws of Israel (Deut. 16:16).

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.

—Genesis 4:3-5

While both of these men brought their offerings in worship, only one of them received the approval of Jehovah. The scripture gives the reason: Abel brought the "firstlings" of his flock, and a "fat" one. In other words, he brought his best. The offering was in accordance with the commandment. "The firstlings of the flock" has definite meaning in the scripture.

The first specific mention of tithing in the Old Testament is found recorded in connection with Abram's presentation of the tenth of the spoils of battle to the priest Melchizedek.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, pos-

sessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he [Abram] gave him a tenth of all.

—Genesis 14:18-20

Evidently Abram presented the "tenth" as an act of worship, as an acknowledgment that the Most High God was "possessor of heaven and earth." But the outstanding question that faces one in this brief story is: *Where did Abraham learn the obligation to pay the tenth?* Dr. Lansdell says concerning this: "We may venture the hypothesis that God from the beginning taught that it was the duty of man to render a portion of his increase to his Maker, and that that portion was not to be less than a tenth; then we shall see that the facts recorded in Genesis not only do not contradict such a supposition, but corroborate and strengthen it."

READ GENESIS 14:17-20

In regard to money as well as to time, there is great advantage in its methodical use. Especially is it wise to dedicate a certain portion of our means to purposes of charity and religion, and this is more easily begun in youth than in after life. The greatest advantage of making a little fund of this kind is that when we are asked to give, the competition is not between self on the one hand and charity on the other, but between the different purposes of religion and charity with one another, among which we ought to make the most careful choice. It is desirable that the fund thus devoted should not be less than one tenth of our means: and it tends to bring a blessing on the rest.

—WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE

Truth, be more precious to me than the eyes
Of happy love; burn hotter in my throat
Than passion, and possess me like my pride;
More sweet than freedom, more desired than joy,
More sacred than the pleasing of a friend.

MAX EASTMAN

Almighty God, from whom all good things come; give thy grace, we humbly beseech thee, to those whom thou hast entrusted with riches; that they, as faithful stewards, may dispense them in the service of thy kingdom for the increase thereof; to the honor and praise of Him, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield

Tenth Week—Second Day

THE TITHE AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's: it is holy unto Jehovah. And if a man will redeem aught of his tithe, he shall add unto it the fifth part thereof. And all the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto Jehovah. . . . These are the commandments, which Jehovah commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai.

—Leviticus 27:30-32, 34

In today's scripture the tithe emerges out of the mists of the patriarchal days and becomes an institution in the life of the Hebrew people. It should be noted that even as God did not give the Sabbath as a new institution, but said "*Remember* the Sabbath day," so he does not refer to tithe paying as a new requirement, but reminds the people that the "tithe *is* the Lord's." There is only one reasonable inference to be made—namely, the ancient and holy obligation which Abraham had been taught in common with the other peoples is henceforth to be embodied in the new code of laws of the chosen people.

But it should constantly be remembered at this point that paying the tithe was much more than giv-

ing; it was the acknowledgment in holy worship of *God's ownership,* that

> The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;
> The world, and they that dwell therein.

Then God's purpose in asking the tenth rises above systematic or other giving; indeed, the true steward cannot *give* anything to God.

> We give thee but thine own,
> Whate'er the gift may be:
> All that we have is thine alone,
> A trust, O Lord, from thee.
>
> —William W. How

Accordingly, whether the steward pays the tenth, or some other proportion, to the work of the Kingdom, all of it is God's. Accordingly, the payment of the tithe is fundamentally the acknowledgment of that fact.

Read Leviticus 27:30-34

For what, in dealing with this obligation, did the Jews not do? They contributed tithes, and tithes again for the orphans, widows, and proselytes. Now, however, we are wont to hear such and such a one say with astonishment, "So and so gives tithes!" How great a disgrace, I ask, is this: and what among the Jews was no matter of astonishment or celebrity, has now among Christians become a matter of surprise. If it were a dangerous thing to fail in giving tithes then, to be sure it is much more dangerous now.

—Chrysostom (fourth century)

> Man's life is but a working day
> Whose tasks are set aright;
> A time to work, a time to play,
> And then a quiet night.
>
> And then, please God, a quiet night,
> Where palms are green and robes are white.

A long-drawn breath, a balm of sorrow,
And all things lovely on the morrow.
—CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

O God, my Saviour, teach me thy will. What hast thou for me to do this day? What hast thou for me to say? Open thou my lips, that I may speak, but open first mine ears that I may hear. Help me to wait upon thy word. Save me from lost opportunities and from mistakes. Reveal to me thine every detail for my life. In nothing let me live apart from thee. Sanctify my home, my place of business, and my resting hours. So let thy heaven for me begin on earth; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Tenth Week—Third Day

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

IT must not be supposed that the Jew stopped with the first tithe. That, indeed, acknowledged God's sovereignty, but it did not fulfill the obligation of the worshiper. In addition to the first tithe, there was the *second, or festival, tithe;* and then, in addition to this, every third year a *third tithe for the poor, the widowed and the orphaned.* The scriptures seem to be perfectly clear on this. Moreover, we have the testimony of several ancient writers. For instance, Josephus says: "Besides those two tithes which I have already said you are to pay every year, the one for the Levites and the other for the festivals, you are to bring every third year a tithe to be distributed to those that want; to women also that are widows, and to children that are orphans." The command for the "festival tithe" reads thus:

Thou shalt surely tithe all the increase of thy seed, that which cometh forth from the field year by year. And thou

shalt eat before Jehovah thy God, in the place which he shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there, . . . that thou mayest learn to fear Jehovah thy God always.

—Deuteronomy 14:22-23

The third, or charity tithe, seems to be a prophecy that had its fulfillment at Pentecost when the members of the church gladly ministered to the brethren "as any had need," even to the selling of their property to obtain the funds. This was indeed stewardship at its best.

At the end of every three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase in the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: and the Levite, because he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest.

—Deuteronomy 14:28-29

Let us not fail to note that in each instance the basic motive for paying the tithe was stated: "That thou mayest learn to fear Jehovah thy God always," and "that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest."

READ PROVERBS 3:5-6, 9-10

The Christian who measures his giving by the standards laid down in the New Testament will not ask himself, "What proportion of the income which God has given me would he have me keep for myself?" Instead he will ask, "How much ought I to give to Him?" With these standards in vogue we would have fewer church members who spend more for the upkeep of their automobiles than they do the upkeep of the Kingdom. . . . I am making an appeal for Christian men and women to give first things first place; and I do say emphatically that there is something radically

wrong with the viewpoint of the church member who gives his luxuries first place in his financial calculations, and the support of the kingdom of God second place.

—William J. Elliott

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

—Isaac Watts

O Lord Jesus, we pray for the increase of those who endure prosperity, whose possessions turn neither their heads nor their hearts, who bless the world with their substance, and join with God in the building of the Kingdom here on earth. Amen.

Tenth Week—Fourth Day

THE TITHE AND THE TITHER

While the scripture makes it clear that the tithe was necessary to sustain the priesthood and the house of worship, yet the beautiful ritual which was given to the Hebrew and which he was to repeat whenever he came with his first fruits and tithes makes it appear that *God's primary concern was that his children should remember and acknowledge their dependence upon the Lord, the Giver.* Accordingly, the worshiper would come before the priest, and presenting his tithes and offerings, would say:

I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come unto the land which Jehovah sware unto our fathers to give us.

—Deuteronomy 26:3*b*

After the priest had taken what was offered, in equally significant language the worshiper would acknowledge his stewardship, by saying:

A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and we cried unto Jehovah, the God of our fathers, and Jehovah heard our voice, and saw our affliction, . . . and . . . brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand; . . . and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O Jehovah, hast given me.

—Deuteronomy 26:5*b*-10

If one reads carefully the above, it will become evident how effective a piece of religious education was this ritual, and how deeply significant in the life of Israel must have been the presentation of the tithes and the offerings. No wonder then that at a later date —at a time of great apostasy, when the selfishness of many led them to neglect their tithing obligations— Jehovah sent his prophet with a flaming warning:

Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with the curse.

—Malachi 3:8

READ DEUTERONOMY 26:5-19

It seems clear, then, in the light of revelation, and from the practice of, perhaps, all ancient nations, that the man

who denies God's claim to a portion of the wealth that comes to his hands is much akin to a spiritual anarchist, whilst he is condemned by Scripture as a robber. Indeed, if in the days of Malachi not to pay the tithe was accounted robbery, can a Christian who withholds the tenth be—now, any more than then—accounted honest toward God?

—HENRY LANSDELL

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

—ALEXANDER POPE

Dear Christ, help me this day to keep loyal to the holy habits thou didst teach. I know how much I need them in the barren hours when God seems so far away and life so empty. But help me never to mistake, to think of holy habits as the end, for it is thee I need, not habits, but thyself, dear Lord. Amen.

Tenth Week—Fifth Day

TITHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

And they shall not appear before Jehovah empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee.

—Deuteronomy 16:16*b*-17

As I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper.

—I Corinthians 16:1*b*-2

Coming now to the New Testament, it seems impossible to discover that there is anything new taught concerning the necessity and methods of the stewardship of possessions. There is the same insistence that worship is insincere which comes empty-handed. There is

also stresssed the importance of systematic and proportionate beneficence. The tithe seems to be endorsed as a bottom standard, and freewill gifts are urged just as they were in the Old Testament. The only difference seems to be that the New Testament exhorts Christians to do *as a matter of loving loyalty* what, in the old dispensation, was made a matter of law.

As an illustration of how love, which is the New Testament principle, may begin with the tenth but will not end there, David McConaughy in *Money the Acid Test* has prepared the following suggestive outline. It would be an interesting study to discover how every one of the New Testament references can be matched by another reference to some great soul who in the darker days of the Old Testament did actually climb to the New Testament heights and caught real visions of the taller reaches of loyal stewardship.

I. "A tenth"—paid by pagans—Genesis 4:3
II. "The tenth"—paid by patriarchs—Genesis 28:22
III. "Tithes"—paid by Israel—(*a*) Leviticus 27:30
(*b*) Deuteronomy 14:22
(*c*) Deuteronomy 14:28-29
IV. "The half"—paid by Zacchaeus—Luke 19:8
V. "As prospered"—Paul's rule for freewill offerings—I Corinthians 16:2
VI. "To their power and beyond"—Macedonian converts—II Corinthians 8:5
VII. "All"—the poor widow—Mark 12:41

READ MATTHEW 5:17-19

Proportionate giving is taught and exemplified in both the Old and the New Testaments.

The Old and New Testaments can neither be divorced nor put in antagonism; they supplement and complement

each other. God's "Law" and God's "Grace" are not opposed.

—Elijah W. Halford

It is astonishing how soon the whole conscience begins to unravel if a single stitch drops; one little sin indulged in makes a hole you could put your head through.

—Charles Buxton

In all the little things of life,
Thyself, Lord, may I see;
In little and in great alike
Reveal thy love to me.

So shall my undivided life
To thee, my God, be given;
And all this earthly course below
Be one dear path to heaven.

—Horatio Bonar

O Lord, we love thee, we magnify thee, we worship thee! In loving loyalty we place upon thine altar our all—of time, of talents, and of earthly store—clinging to thy assurance that we love thee because thou hast first loved us. All this day long, we beseech thee, that beside our every path of service thou wilt be our comrade and our strength. So grant us this thy grace, that being enabled to fulfill the stewardship of all our days, we may enter into like labors in thy eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—J. Homer Slutz

Tenth Week—Sixth Day

JESUS AND TITHING

"Did Jesus advocate by example and precept the paying of the tithe as the acknowledgment of stewardship? Looking at our Lord's perfect example in scrupulously keeping the law, *we are led to infer that he not only*

paid tithes and all other religious dues, but that he probably exceeded what the law required."

Henry Lansdell in *The Sacred Tenth* makes the above statement after showing: (1) that in Jesus' day tithe paying was not only recognized as a duty but was especially "in the air" owing to the activity of the Pharisees; (2) that the Pharisees, who were ever looking for an opportunity to condemn Jesus, never did accuse him of failure in this regard; (3) that the New Testament portrays Jesus as exceedingly careful in his observance of the law. His insistence upon being baptized by John at the River Jordan is one of the several instances recorded in Scripture.

But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffereth him.

—Matthew 3:15

But we will misunderstand Jesus unless we see that it was the *principle* of the tithe that he was advocating. This means that it was the principle of acknowledgment that he saw back of the tithe. He did not command afresh, as from a New Testament Sinai, the law of the tithe any more than he did the law of the Sabbath or the law against murder or stealing. But he sought to lift his disciples into a new atmosphere where they could see the spiritual significance of the Mosaic laws.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.

—Matthew 23:23

In this scripture Jesus tells the Pharisees that they did well to pay tithes, but that they did wrong in

thinking that the tithe, or any other holy habit, is an end in itself. The failure of the Pharisees was a failure to perceive the meaning of the tithe as the acknowledgment of the total surrender of all possessions and the pledge of a godly life of mercy and justice.

READ MATTHEW 5:17-20

The need of our day is for a church that lovingly pays to God at least the first fruits of all time, energy, and money.
—FREDERICK A. AGAR

Whoso neglects a thing which he suspects he ought to do, because it seems to him too small a thing, is deceiving himself; it is not too little, but too great for him, that he doeth it not.
—E. B. PUSEY

We do not give God a fraction of that which we possess, but we loyally acknowledge God's sovereignty over the whole.
—HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL

Ah, when I look up at that Cross
Where God's great Steward suffered loss—
Yea, loss of life and blood for me!—
A trifling thing it seems to be
To pay the tithe, dear Lord, to thee,
Of time or talent, wealth or store—
Full well I know I owe thee more;
A million times I owe thee more!

But that is just the reason why
I lift my heart to God on high,
And pledge thee by this portion small,
My life, my love, my all in all!
This holy token at thy Cross
I know, as gold, must seem but dross;
But in my heart, Lord, thou dost see

How it has pledged my all to thee,
That I a steward true may be!

—R. S. C.

O Lord Jesus, divine Saviour, teach us now and always to understand how blessed is the man who endureth prosperity; whose riches turn neither his head nor his heart; who seeketh not his own to the hurt of his neighbor; who blesseth the world with his substance; for at the last his life shall be seen as the promise of the Life Eternal, to the glory of God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tenth Week—Seventh Day

THE DOOR TO LARGER LIFE

John Henry Jowett tells of a call on a Christian cobbler who cobbled in his little shop by the sea. The preacher sat down by the workbench and watched the man at his work, listening to the steady beat of the pegging hammer. Little by little the monotony of the work, the narrowness of the room, and the dimness of the light—from one small window—brought a spirit of depression over the watcher; and he cried at length, "Man, don't you ever get tired of this narrow life?" Brushing the litter from his apron, the old cobbler drew himself up to his full height. He reached out his hand and opened the door, saying, "Whenever I feel like that, Pastor, I open this door." The open door revealed to the two men a vista of ever-widening sea. "Immediately that little room was glorified," said Dr. Jowett, "by the vastness of its relationships—to fields and skies and rolling sea, and to the Creator of them all."

It will be like this with the scriptural tithe—a little thing in itself, and, if kept apart from its larger and

holy relationships, a dwarfing thing. *But when the tithe is used as God commanded it to be used—as the door into the larger life of Christian stewardship*—it becomes not only the much-needed sinews of Christian warfare but also the witness of our faith and the pledge of our allegiance, and the token of our surrender to the blessed God.

Thus it would seem that J. Campbell White is quite right when he says: "The strongest passage in the Bible on the enforcement of the tithe does not say anything directly about tithing, but it states a principle which applies to all the law of God."

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

—Romans 8:1-4

READ ROMANS 13:7-9

Few things could happen so far-reaching and high-reaching in the life of the Church as the recruiting of an army of tithers, who, declining to be Pharisees, and refusing to be bound by any mere law, still use the tithe in giving to the work of God as a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ. After such an army the windows of heaven would not remain shut; and the assured blessing would come from God.

—BISHOP EDWIN H. HUGHES

And, as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein,
Not like the hireling, for his selfish gain,
With backward glances and reluctant tread,
Making a merit of his coward dread,

But cheerfully, in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led;
Doing God's will as if it were my own,
Yet trusting not in mine, but in his strength alone!
—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

O Eternal God, the very God of peace and of all consolation, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep through the everlasting covenant, make us fruitful in all good works to do thy will, and work in us that which is acceptable in thy sight; sanctify us throughout, and keep our whole spirit, soul and body faultless unto the coming of thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Thou art faithful, O Father, who hast promised this, who also shalt bring it to pass; to thee, therefore, be given everlasting praise, honor and glory. Amen.
—Based on Hebrews 13:20-21

QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION.

a) Do you tithe your income for the Kingdom? Why?
b) How may one begin the practice of Christian stewardship?
c) How do you know that you have accepted any principle of living? If it makes no difference in conduct and spirit, has it been accepted?
d) What does the tithe signify? Is it an end in itself? What part of stewardship is it?
e) Have you found the principle of tithing taught in the Bible? Practiced by the saints of old? Preached by your pastor?
f) When and where did tithing begin? When does stewardship begin?

1. OFFERINGS AND WORSHIP.
a) What is the relation of tithing stewardship to worship? Is the tithe ever mere tribute or tax?

b) How generally is worship in the Scriptures accompanied by the offering of material possessions? Cite instances.
c) Where did Abraham learn tithing?

2. The Tithe an Acknowledgment.
a) Why cannot a Christian steward *give* to God?
b) Why must ownership be acknowledged?
c) What portion of your possessions belongs to God?

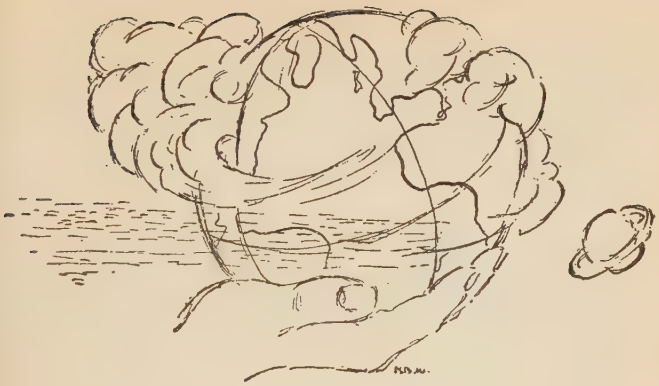
3. Tithes and Offerings.
a) Is the tithe to be the maximum of one's paying for the support of the Kingdom? The minimum?
b) How, in modern times, does tithing stewardship bring the worshiper into contact with God? Is God consciously present?

4. The Tithe and the Tither.
a) For what purposes was the tithe used among the Jews?
b) Of what is paying the tithe an acknowledgment?
c) How does paying tithes benefit the tither?
d) What promises in the Old Testament are withdrawn in the New Testament?
e) What are the blessings promised in Malachi 3:8-10?

5. Tithing in the New Testament.
a) What is the compulsion upon the Christian steward—law or love? Legality or loyalty?

6. Jesus and Tithing.
a) What is Jesus' attitude toward tithing?
b) What is the principle of the tithe?

7. The Door to Larger Life.
a) How large is your world? Your life? Your stewardship?



Chapter XI

Stewardship and World Missions

A new word has emerged in America! An important word, for there is a revolutionary idea behind it. The idea and the word are vital to the future of the age ahead of us—both in the Western hemisphere and everywhere else. "Isolationism" is the word. And with the word a new question is being asked: "Can a Christian be an isolationist?" And with this question goes another: "Can America be isolationist and hold its place in the world—the place God seems to have designed for America?"

The tragic fact is that while this word has emerged in this generation, it has taken more than nineteen centuries to bring it to birth. Jesus was the first to ask these questions—not in the exact words, but nevertheless he asked them. What else could he have meant

when he laid upon his disciples the stewardship of being his witnesses to the ends of the earth? "Go ye into all the world," he said, and he repeated the command so many times that there was no doubt as to his meaning. But how slow his Church and his disciples have been to understand!

"I HAVE A STEWARDSHIP"

Some years ago I sat at breakfast in a Chicago hotel with a missionary on furlough from China. We talked together about the things of the Kingdom. Finally he said to me, "Did I ever tell you how I came to be a missionary?"

"Tell me," I answered.

"I was born in China," he replied. "My father and mother had been missionaries for a long time. I begged to be sent home to America for school and college. They consented, and I went to America. One thing I had agreed with myself: I would never be a missionary! And then I went back to visit my parents. The months passed quickly. Then one day I started with the old servant of the mission, in a bullock cart, a long distance to the railroad station. Halfway to our destination one of the wheels of the cart broke, and we were obliged to go into a blacksmith shop in a little Chinese village. While the blacksmith worked, it seemed that the whole town gathered around, out of curiosity at the presence of a white man! For our old servant, it was the opportunity to bear his Christian witness. He stood up on a stump and told them the story of God's great love in Christ. He talked until the wheel was fixed, and then we started away. When we reached the outskirts of the village, we heard a voice calling to us, and stopped. It was the blacksmith. When he came up, I said in direct American fashion, 'What is the matter? Didn't I pay you enough?'

" 'O sir, that is not it. I wanted to ask you a ques-

tion. When you were gone, the people asked how long ago was it that this Son of God came down to earth. Can you tell me?'

"I replied, 'It was about nineteen hundred years ago that Jesus came to earth.' "

It was at this point that my friend paused in his story.

"Do you know what made me a missionary?" he asked. "It was the look in that man's face as I spoke those words. 'Nineteen hundred years ago!' he repeated. 'Nineteen hundred years? Why haven't we heard of him before?' "

That is the question! Why? It must be because the Church as a whole has never understood that to be a Christian is to have what Paul felt when he said, "I have a stewardship entrusted unto me. . . . Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (I Cor. 9:17*b*, 16*b*).

When a returned missionary was asked, "Why do you want to go back?" the answer was, "I can't sleep for thinking of them." Wouldn't that make a pretty good definition of Christian stewardship? "I can't sleep for thinking of them"? That is what Paul meant when he said, "I have a stewardship"! Missions and stewardship always go hand in hand. Who has ever discovered a missionary who has hesitated to give of his time, of his talents, or of his possessions—even a tithe—to Christ's program? The Church that came out of Pentecost was at once a stewardship Church and a missionary Church. And the two things mean the same. To be a Christian is to be a witness—a witness not merely in your local community but in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Jesus made it clear to his disciples that no Christian could be an isolationist. Let men think of us "as stew-

ards of the mysteries of God"—and "to the ends of the earth"!

THE CALL OF CHRIST

Part of the trouble has been that so few members of the Church have understood what the call of Christ really is. So many have never placed the selfish ideas of isolationism over against the idealism of the Christian life. Here is an example. It happened twenty years ago in a church in the State of New York. The preacher had poured out his heart to his people that morning, urging them to try to see the vision of Christ saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." It seemed to the minister that he was sharing the passion of his Lord as he preached. And then at the close of the service came the well-dressed young professional man, who dared to say to his pastor, "Why do you get all het up over the heathen? Do you think God is going to send them to hell just because they have never heard of our Christ?"

How would you answer a question like that? When that minister got his breath, he said to the man before him: "Don't you understand that it isn't a question of God's sending anybody to hell? These people are in hell already. Don't you realize that what Christ is calling us to do is to help him get them out?"

What lay at the heart of this man's blindness? Was it not this, that religion was to him hardly more than his own personal security against trouble in the world to come? If he were safe, why should he worry about anyone else?

That was what George Gordon meant when he said, "Our churches are full of people who have never understood what the call of Christ really is." There is no doubt that it is a call to a regenerated personality, but it is just as true that the gospel of the Kingdom is a call to help our Lord regenerate this earth. "After this

manner therefore pray ye: . . . Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth" (A.V).

I have sometimes wished that the young man from New York—and all like him—could have been with our American missionary doctor that day in the hospital in China when a Chinese farmer brought his baby girl, with the pitiful appeal, "Can you do anything to save her, doctor?" The physician examined the body of the little child, and saw that something had chewed off the toes of one of her feet. He said, "Tell me what did this?" Then with hesitation the man told his story:

"We had three lovely children, but the evil spirits came and took them all; and when this little child arrived, mother and I agreed that we would keep her in the dark where the evil spirits would not find her. So we kept her in the cellar of our house. But at last the sickness came. We called in the village doctor. He told us that we would have to disfigure her so that the evil spirits would not want her. But mother said, 'Never!' But the child grew worse, and when the medicine man came again he repeated his warning. Then mother chewed off her toes!" Overcoming his emotion, that father continued his story. "And last week the evil spirits got their revenge by taking away my wife! Doctor, this is all I have left. Can you do anything for her?" Do we not understand what the minister meant when he said to that young New Yorker, "Don't you know that these people are living in hell, and God is calling us to help them out?" Isn't this what Christ came to do? Isn't this the business of the Church and the church member? Isn't this the supreme stewardship of the disciples of Christ?

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

But how slow even the leaders of the Church have been to recognize the fundamental truth of Jesus' mes-

sage—that the very life and vitality and prosperity of the Church would depend upon obedience to the great command to take the Christian gospel and life to the ends of the earth!

It was a generation ago that Robert F. Horton blessed England with his ministry. The thing in particular that I remember about him was his "Missionary Conversion" that appeared in the *Missionary Review of the World.* The confession and story of this great preacher opened new windows in my own youthful ministry, as it must have done for many others. I think the story should be revived:

I entered the ministry with a strong purpose to win souls, and with the passion for social and industrial reform, which I had caught from Professor T. H. Green and Arnold Toynbee. But the foreign missionary work seemed distant and impracticable. I am not sure that I even prayed for it; if I had prayed for it interest would have been excited. When the annual Sunday for the missionary appeal came around, I accepted the service of a missionary offered by the Society, and I myself went away for the Sunday. I fear, therefore, that I must have been one of those pastors who are the despair of our missionary societies. . . . My conversion came about in the following way: A Scotchman named James Malcolm, who had been brought up in the United Presbyterian Church, came under my ministry. No doubt he quickly noted the great defect; but he had too much tact and wisdom to make a frontal attack. The method he adopted was to send me, month by month, the *Missionary Review of the World.* Dr. A. T. Pierson had just brought the magazine to a level of fascinating efficiency. It caught my attention; I read it through, and looked forward to its arrival. I bound the numbers each year, until four or five stout volumes stood on my shelves, the monument of a conversion!

The effect of this study, extended over a few years, was to work in me a clear conviction, which now seems to me a truism, but never had even dawned on me when I was called

to the ministry, *the conviction that the first object of the Church is to push to the regions beyond,* to extend the reign of the Redeemer where he is not yet known. The obvious corollary was that every church must put this first thing first, and must make the missionary work the first charge on its interest, its resources, its members.

Soon after this conviction was reached, it was subjected to a severe trial. We were, as a church, working in the poor district of Kentish Town; and after using for some years temporary premises we found it necessary to build a hall and clubrooms of our own. The cost would be Six Thousand Pounds, and Mr. Malcolm was made the treasurer of the fund. Strange to say, he proposed to me that we should put this fund first, and let the missionary appeal slide until our new buildings were paid for. "No," I said, "you have taught me as a matter of principle that the missionary work comes first, and I cannot allow our own claims for work close at home to supersede the first duty of the church." He reluctantly assented. I make the strongest appeal I could for increased missionary contributions. The event taught me a lesson which I can never forget. When the year was over the whole sum of Six Thousand Pounds had been raised, so that the buildings were opened free of debt, and the missionary gifts for the year were about one fifth larger than they had been the year before.

Here was the principle verified. I could not doubt but that I had been led to discover the true order in the spiritual world, and what was proved first by experience became clearer and clearer in theory as time went on. The first condition of health in a church, as in an individual, is that she should not be thinking of herself. While she is engaged only in her own work, work which promotes her own increase and prosperity, she has not yet caught the spirit of her Lord. *She must lose herself to find herself.*

This introduction has built its appeal not upon the Scriptures but upon experience. Yet, as will become evident, Scripture and experience will ever go together. To every disciple Christ has given the stewardship of the whole wide world.

Eleventh Week—First Day

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

—Matthew 28:16-20

The Great Commission has been called by the unfriendly "The Great Absurdity." But think how absurd it must have sounded at the beginning to some half-consecrated disciples of Jesus! Picture such when they heard for the first time of the great stewardship which Jesus had entrusted to his disciples—to preach the gospel *to all people everywhere!*

Just how absurd that command seemed may be imagined by recalling how absurd it seemed at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the money-seeking East India Company, rebelling at the going of missionaries to India. They said: "The sending out of missionaries into our Eastern possessions [is] the maddest, most extravagant, most costly, most indefensible project which has ever been suggested by a moonstruck fanatic. Such a scheme is pernicious, imprudent, useless, harmful, dangerous, profitless, fantastic. It strikes against all reason and sound policy, it brings the peace and safety of our possessions into peril."

Note that those big business men were not concerned about "the peace and safety" of the world, but

of "our own possessions!" But the tragic fact of history is that so many church members across the centuries have believed that the missionary movement was indeed a fifth wheel to the Christian chariot. I remember the first experience that a young minister had with his self-centered official board in a little New England church. No sooner had the minister announced that "Next Sunday I will preach a missionary sermon and take the annual missionary offering," than a big, well-to-do lumberman rose to his feet and said: "I guess our new minister doesn't know us very well as yet. I suppose we might as well tell him at the beginning that we do not believe very much in missions. There are plenty of heathen right around here. We do not like to see our money leave this town." No wonder that the greatest missionary of the Church said something about the preaching of the Cross being foolishness to them that perish, and then added, "But to us who are being saved it is the power of God unto salvation."

READ MARK 16:15, 19-20

No Christian can rightly say he does not believe in missions, for that would imply that he does not believe in his own religion. Christians should look upon the whole non-Christian world as the "prodigal son" of humanity and believe that it is the duty of true Christians to call this prodigal humanity home to God and to share with them their treasure—the gift of the Father's love.

—SHERWOOD EDDY

Dreams are they? But ye cannot stay them
Or thrust the dawn back for one hour!
Truth, Love, and Justice, if ye slay them,
Return with more than earthly power!

—ALFRED NOYES

Dear God, whom we love with all our hearts and minds and strength, make us to be men and women of

the burning heart. But how can we love thee unless we love the things which thou dost love? How can we love God whom we cannot see unless we love our neighbors near and far? Set us aflame, we pray, with passion for a transformed earth. In Christ's dear name. Amen.

Eleventh Week—Second Day

A SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE TASK

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 1:7-8

It is generally conceded that Pentecost was the birthday of the Christian Church. For days the disciples had been obeying the command of their lord to "tarry" and wait for "the promise of the Father." It was a promise of power—power to do the impossible! Woe unto any one of us who forgets what the Great Commission was: "Ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." Repeat those words: "Unto the uttermost part of the earth." What an impossible task, a monumental stewardship!

"You really expect to make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese Empire?" It was an amused American shipowner who asked that question of Robert Morrison. And the answer came: "No, sir, but I expect God will!" And God did.

The same answer could have been made by those first disciples after they had felt the warmth of the Pentecost heart-warming, and the confidence of the

power of the Spirit-Presence. Indeed, Peter did make a similar answer one day: "Why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?" (Acts 3:12*b*.)

We will miss the whole secret of the missionary movement if we suppose it is a man-made movement. Notice what was expected of the disciples: "Ye shall be *my witnesses*." "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful," said the Apostle Paul. The witness is very important, but witness unto whom? "Unto me" declares Jesus! It is vitally important to note that Matthew quotes our Lord as saying, at the end of the command to "Go": "Lo, I am with you always." It is the Christ-Presence who is to change China —and the world! To the same point Mark's Gospel ends with these words: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them." That was the secret of victory: "the Lord working with them!"

READ ACTS 1:1-9

The primary work of the Church is to make Jesus Christ known and obeyed and loved throughout the world.

—JOHN R. MOTT

If I were to follow my own inclinations, they would lead me to settle down quietly with the Bakwains, or some other small tribe, and devote some of my time to my children; *but Providence seems to call me to the regions beyond.*

—DAVID LIVINGSTONE

I will have faith
That God is still in Heaven;
I will have faith that he is by my side;
I will have faith though every star is darkened,
That he and truth abide!

—R. S. C.

O God, Who on the Day of Pentecost didst send down tongues of fire on the heads of Thy holy Apostles, to teach them and lead them unto all truth, giving them boldness with fervent zeal to preach the Gospel to all nations; raise up, we pray Thee, Thy power and come among Thy people, and with great might succour us. Bless, O Lord, all Thy servants everywhere; give the Holy Spirit to all who teach and all who learn; send forth men and women full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, mighty in the Scriptures, and able ministers of the New Testament; . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Archbishop Benson (1829)

Eleventh Week—Third Day

WORLD-WIDE WITNESS WILL WIN

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.

—Acts 8:1*b*, 4

Christianity has always flourished under persecution. It was surely so at the beginning. "In the beginning Christianity was kept at a high level by its being dangerous to be a Christian." Probably some faint-hearted people asked, "Is the Church to be defeated at the start?" Stephen was stoned! A young man named Saul was aflame with determination to stamp out the "new religion." He entered into "every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison." Christians were learning that it *costs* to build the Kingdom of Christ! And the persecution went on until the disciples in Jerusalem "were all scattered abroad."

What would those Christians do now? The New Testament answers the question for us: "They therefore that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." The "therefore" at the beginning of the sentence tells the story. It seems to say that persecution has really turned out to be the spreading of the gospel. "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." The Christians were driven abroad, but they went witnessing and conquering! Who were these disciples? They were the rank and file of people. Everybody "except the apostles." The apostles remained to face the fire in Jerusalem. These were the laymen who went everywhere preaching! That makes the imperishable Church. The fact is that most missionary conquests have come through faithful witnessing of the converted "natives." It may take seven years for Adoniram Judson to baptize his first convert in Burma—seven years of facing persecution and death!—but in the end Christ would win out in some native hearts, and then the fires would begin to spread. The number of great missionary leaders has been comparatively few; but Christ—living in the hearts of ordinary men—has won the victories!

"Well, it looks as though all our missionary effort has been wasted. The Church is destroyed on the mission field. The Christians have been scattered abroad!" Are such statements being made in this day of a war-torn world? Nineteen centuries of history seem to indicate that Roy L. Smith was right in his statement: "The fact is that the present disaster may be the greatest opportunity the native churches have ever known. Bereft of the leadership of their missionaries, the national leaders are stepping into the breach. . . . The thousands of native Christians who have learned to pray to the Lord Christ will go on praying to him." There will be suffering and persecution and some dis-

ciples will be "scattered abroad," but they will go "preaching the word!"

READ ACTS 7:59-60; 8:1-5

He who loves not, lives not;
He who lives by the Life cannot die.
—RAYMOND LULL

No enthusiasm will ever stand the strain that Jesus Christ will put upon his worker; only one thing will, and that is a personal relationship to Himself.
—OSWALD CHAMBERS

I wonder if Christ had a little black dog
All curly and woolly like mine;
With two silky ears, and a nose round and wet,
And eyes brown and tender that shine.

I'm afraid that He hadn't, because I have read
How He prayed in the Garden alone,
For all of His friends and disciples had fled,
Even Peter, the one called a "stone."

And oh, I am sure that that little black dog,
With a heart so tender and warm,
Would never have left Him to suffer alone,
But, creeping right under His arm,

Would have licked those dear fingers in agony clasped,
And counting all favors but loss,
When they took Him away, would have trotted behind
And followed Him quite to the Cross!
—ELIZABETH GARDNER REYNOLDS

O God, who hast made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the whole earth, and didst send Thy blessed Son to preach peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are nigh; grant that all the peoples of the world may feel after Thee and

find Thee; and hasten, O Lord, the fulfillment of Thy promise to pour out Thy Spirit upon all flesh; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—G. COTTON, Bishop of Calcutta (1813)

Eleventh Week—Fourth Day

PREJUDICES MUST BE CONQUERED

Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

—Acts 11:1-3

A modern saint has said: "The first thing that happens after we have realized our election to God in Christ Jesus is the destruction of our prejudices and parochial notions." (Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest,* p. 265.) Would that this statement were always true! Then we could hope more quickly to get rid of the blighting sins of nationalism and racialism that have cursed the centuries.

It took a series of miracles to get the Apostle Peter to face his prejudices against the Gentiles, and to conquer them. Or did he conquer them? Do we conquer ours? We must if we expect to continue close to the heart of Christ. That was what the Apostle found out. He did not want to go to the foreigners! Certainly it was shocking to think of going into their homes and eating with them! But he was called to a great stewardship, and the Spirit of Jesus said, "Go!" And the alternative was before him: to obey or lose companionship with his Lord.

As a result Peter made some great discoveries. First, that there are noble souls among the foreigners, that

the hunger for God is a universal hunger, that God is no respecter of persons—Jews or Gentiles. And he discovered that spiritual regeneration has no geographical or ecclesiastical limits.

Certainly, geographical limitations are off today. Jules Verne's story *Around the World in Eighty Days* is out of date. Yesterday the newspapers announced that the "Globster" had started to circle the planet in 150 hours! When my missionary friend went to South America a generation ago it took him 130 days. Last month he returned in sixteen hours. Our neighbors are now in our front yards. Geography has no limits today, but our prejudices have!

There was another thing that the Apostle discovered that he was up against when he followed Christ to the foreigners—not only his own but other people's prejudices—even among his fellow disciples. "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.' Happy for the early Church that when they heard Peter's story "they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18*b*).

READ ACTS 11:1-18

An interesting thing happened the other day at Conference. The president of the Woman's Society of Christian Service remarked, "Wendell Willkie need not have gone around the world to learn that missions and missionaries are the chief factors in building good will toward the United States."

—From a preacher's diary

I came home certain of one clear and significant fact; that there exists in the world today a gigantic reservoir of good will toward us, the American people. Many things have created this enormous reservoir. At the top of the list go the hospitals, schools, and colleges which Americans—

missionaries, teachers and doctors—have founded in the far corners of the world. . . . Now, in our time of crisis, we owe a great debt to these men and women who have made friends for us.

—Wendell Willkie

Most merciful Father, we beseech thee to send thy heavenly blessing upon thy servants the missionaries and teachers of thy Church, that they may be clothed with righteousness, and that thy Word spoken by their mouth may have such success that it may never be spoken in vain; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—The Book of Worship of The Methodist Church

Eleventh Week—Fifth Day

THE RANK AND FILE ARE ABLE

For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong.

—I Corinthians 1:26-27

A United States Senator, recently home from a senatorial investigation trip to the scene of war, said: "American doughboys are reaping heavily where the missionaries have so long and patiently sown." Thousands of parents have been receiving letters from their service boys in the Far East to this effect: "I have never thought much of the missionary work of the Church, but we certainly are getting our eyes opened. A handful of missionaries risked their lives and sacrificed the comforts of home to teach these natives Christianity. . . . Our going has been easier and safer."

All of this is in line with the Apostle's statement,

"God chose the weak things of the world," the things that are despised! In 1808 at Williams College a little group organized themselves, as Sherwood Eddy says, into "the Society of Brethren, the first foreign missionary society in America whose members proposed to go themselves to work for the 'heathen.'" The story is that this society was kept secret because of "the almost universal opposition to an idea so bold as missions." The subsequent history of these "strange" young men reads like a romance. It is strange, too, that the greatest missionary since the Apostle Paul was an obscure shoemaker, William Carey. In 1792 he preached his great sermon "Expect Great Things from God; Attempt Great Things for God." The Baptist Missionary Society, which was organized "with sixty-five dollars in the treasury," would seem like a joke to the missionary leaders of today. So God has chosen "the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong."

Is it true that the missionary movement in America today is supported by a minority of the church members, and that, in the eyes of a certain percentage of the membership, the missionary movement is still to be left to the "fanatical fringe"?

Set us afire, Lord,
Stir us, we pray.
While the world perishes,
We go our way!

Do we or don't we "go our way"? What way is it that a Christian should go in days like these? Are we awake to the vast cruelties abroad in the world—the slaughter of millions of soldiers and civilians, the suffering and starving of vaster millions? "Is it nothing to you?"

There should be no confusion about our God-given stewardship to share in the reconstruction of the world—the building of the Kingdom of God on earth. Are

we ready? John Wesley frequently says in his *Journal,* "I gave them Christ." Well, what Wesley did for England, we can do for the world—provided we really have Christ, and Christ has us, *all there is of us!*

READ I CORINTHIANS 1:20-31

The eighteenth century, for example, with its collapse of an old social order, its appalling economic maladjustment and poverty, its rampant immorality and atheism, . . . was more like our generation than any period in history. Christians were in despair. Did not their enemies say that Christianity had one foot in the grave and needed only decent obsequies to complete its history? . . . Then came the Wesleys to light a fire that broke into such a conflagration of triumphant faith as the English-speaking world had never known before. Once more came an authentic outbreak of a spiritual life, hope born out of despair. . . . If we Christians were worth our salt, we could reproduce that now.

—HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

What did you learn, Soldier? What did you learn at war?
I learned that we must learn sometime what was not learned before,
That victories won on battlefields are victories won in vain,
Unless in peace we kill the germs that breed new wars again.

What did you pray, Soldier? What did you pray at war?
I prayed that we might do the things we have not done before,
That we might mobilize for peace . . . nor mobilize in vain.
Lest Christ and man be forced to climb stark Calvary again.

—DON BLANDING

We pray, dear God, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth! But how can thy Kingdom come until

we love thee more than we do love the kingdoms of this world? Oh, let not our hearts be busy inns; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Eleventh Week—Sixth Day

THE TESTING OF OUR FAITH

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

—I John 5:3-5

"This is the victory that hath overcome the world even our faith!" Faith in what? Faith in whatever we are doing—or trying to do! Who succeeds in anything without believing in that thing? Here is the key to many failures. Do we really believe in the coming of the Kingdom of God? How much have we given to it —of ourselves, of our sons and daughters, of our money? "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth." That is the missionary goal. Jesus ordered it so. A magnificent obsession! Either that, or an "impractical dream!" More than half of the church members throughout the centuries have been in doubt. They have known that they needed salvation for themselves, but they never could quite put the "other half" within the circle of God's vast purpose.

But the inner circle knew better. Some Paul or Barnabas in each generation. The Justin Martyrs and Augustines, and St. Patricks and Wesleys, the Careys and the Thoburns! Why don't we join this "glorious band, the chosen few on whom the Spirit came?"

Christ called the Seventy as well as the Twelve. Meanwhile the fields grow white for the harvest. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers!" Why don't we pray? The need is great; yes, and "in this generation"! Maybe Christ will be able to change the nations before World War III descends in horror upon our children! He is ready to do his part; are we going to be faithful to our stewardship? If we don't, God help our children! The Armageddon will be beyond the most terrible imagination!

"Magnificently mad, isn't he?" They said that of Jesus. Even his brothers said it of Jesus—Jesus who declared, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." And the young Saul believed that Jesus was mad, until he, too, was changed, into Paul the Evangelist—and then his old friends called him mad!

And so across the years. A Francis of Assisi, or a Martin Luther, or a John Knox, or a Francis Asbury, or a Jonathan Edwards, became obsessed with the faith. Then some lukewarm bystander would say, "Magnificently mad, isn't he?" Then—as happened in the case of the late W. T. Stead—another would be wise enough to remark, "Yes, and how I wish he would bite you and me!"

Oh, when will we ever ask, "And who is my neighbor?" It is no longer a matter of geography! The road to Jericho, that used to be so far away, is right at our door. Have we the faith to face the thieves, and the bandits, and dare to be the good Samaritans? There is not too much time left to us before the next attack! Will some other generation have to be the victorious stewards of Him who said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go!" And he waits for us to start. Will we? Will you? Will I? And the Eternal Voice says, "Lo! I am with you."

READ REVELATION 3:14-22

The war has not made us holier, but it has brought home to us the fact that we live in one world and share a common lot.

—L. A. DUREN, JR.

Christianity is destined some day to triumph, but unless she bestirs herself to counteract and roll back these dangerous influences, her triumph, which is so near at hand, may be long delayed.

—JOHN R. MOTT

What we now need to discover . . . is the moral equivalent of war; something heroic that will speak to men as universally as war does, and yet will be as compatible with their spiritual selves as war has proved itself to be incompatible.

—WILLIAM JAMES

A glorious band, the chosen few
On whom the Spirit came,
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew
And mocked the cross and flame;
They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil and pain;
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train! Amen.

—REGINALD HEBER

Eleventh Week—Seventh Day

FINAL VICTORY!

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad,

and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

—Revelation 19:6-7

This is the scripture that inspired Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." St. John is setting over against the tribulations of the early Christians the vision of glorious and final victory. The blood of the martyrs is avenged by judgment descended upon the Great Harlot, Rome. At last God reigns, and Christ is King of Kings!

It is the vision not only of the fall of Rome but also of the final victory of Christ over the world. "Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth." St. John has been granted a vision of the great day for which the disciples of Christ have prayed. It is a vindication of Christ's command, "When ye pray, say . . . Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth."

But when is this vision dated? When shall the day of final victory come? Verse 7 in this scripture gives us a sure answer. It is not the frequently given answer of prophecy. Nevertheless the date is sure. *It is when the bride has made herself ready for the marriage.* Then will the final victory of the Kingdom come! Who is this bride? In the symbolism of the Scripture, the Church is the bride of Christ. In John's vision, the Bride has *at last* put on her wedding garments. The teaching is perfectly plain: the final victory of the Kingdom of God waits for the Church to deck herself in "fine linen, bright and pure." And Scripture says, "the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

But what is righteousness? There are many voices that answer, but one thing is sure—it is Christlikeness. "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Jesus has made it clear that his imperishable Church must be builded upon the witness of those who were sure of him as the

Eternal Christ—the Word of God to men. But there was one thing more: Church members must be like their Lord, in one particular above all others—in cross bearing (Matt. 16:24). Even Peter had to learn this: "Thou Satan, get thee behind me." That was something to take, for the man who a little before had been called "Blessed art thou, Simon." Evidently it is not enough that Jesus should bear the cross alone.

"Who are these people clothed in the long white robes? And where have they come from?" . . .

"They are those," he said, "who have just come out of the great distress, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:13—Weymouth). Or as the Apostle had learned, "I . . . fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ" (Col. 1:24). That means victory!

READ REVELATION 19:1-16

Nothing will induce me to form an impure Church. Fifty added to the Church sounds fine at home, but if only five of these are genuine what will it profit in the Great Day?

—DAVID LIVINGSTONE

"Ye are not your own: for ye have been bought with a price." This text fairly leaps out of the Scriptures. After these years of war no man can say, "My life is my own and I shall do with it as I please. My possessions are my own, I shall do with them as I will." Should such a man be found among us, he is not worthy to be alive. The present sacrifices of our sons and daughters should compel us to face the meaning of the Cross and the call of Christ.

—HARRY D. HENRY

Is there some desert or some stormy sea
Where Thou, good God of angels, wilt send me?
Is there some sod,
Some rock for me to break,
Some handful of thy corn to take

And scatter far afield,
Till it in turn shall yield
Its hundred fold
Of grains of gold,
To feed the waiting children of my God?
Show me the desert, Father, or the sea!
Is it thine enterprise? Great God, send me!
And though this body lies where ocean rolls,
Count me among all faithful souls.

—Edward Everett Hale

O Saviour of the world, when millions have made the sacrifice supreme, when the whole world is groaning in the agony of death and birth, help me to be ashamed of any sinful selfishness of mine. Help me to know it when I see it. At the beginning Christianity was kept Christian because it was dangerous to follow thee. Can it be otherwise today? O Love Divine, cleanse thou this heart of mine. Amen.

QUESTIONS

Introduction.

a) Differentiate between isolationism and the world-wide mission of the Christian faith.
b) Can you as a Christian honestly support isolationism after such a differentiation?

1. The Gospel Is for All People Everywhere.
   a) Can you conceive how in any sense the missionary movement is "a fifth wheel to the Christian chariot"?
   b) What reasons, if any, can you adduce to support such a conception?

2. A Seemingly Impossible Task?
   a) Give some very serious thought to the implications involved in interpreting the missionary movement as man-made or God-given.
   b) How may human beings get the power to see the missionary movement through?

3. World-wide Witness Will Win.
   a) In what ways have recent years revealed unparalleled opportunity for propagating the Christian faith?
   b) Do you believe that world-wide "witnessing" for Christ holds the secret of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth?

4. Prejudices Must Be Conquered.
   a) How would you set about altering those antichristian prejudices which act as a barrier to the success of the missionary movement inside and outside the Church?
   b) Do you really believe that our world is "one world"?

5. The Rank and File Are Able.
   a) Occasionally one hears some Christian ask, in a sort of belittling way, "What can one small person do to help Christ win the world to him when the task is so great?" Are you one of those who should revise upward your faith in the possibility of accomplishing such a task?
   b) Where and how can one help to reconstruct the world according to the ideals of Jesus?

6. The Testing of Our Faith.
   a) Does God depend upon a "few great souls" or upon all his people to build the Kingdom on earth?
   b) Ask yourself now, in the light of recent history, "Who is my neighbor?"

7. Final Victory!
   a) Do you believe in the final victory of the forces of righteousness?
   b) When will these forces become victorious, and what can you do now to help attain this desirable end?

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